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By
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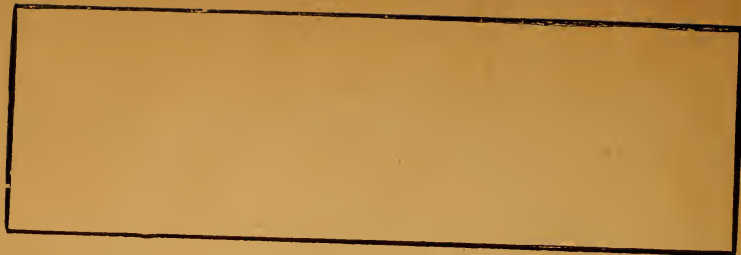
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Compiled by

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Editor Spalding's Official Base Ball Guide

and

BILLY EVANS

American League Umpire

Revised in Accordance with the Changes
in the Official Playing Rules as Adopted
by the National and American Leagues

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Never forget that the batter is the only player in a base ball game who can start a force play, and unless there is a runner on first base when the batter is compelled to go to first base by one of the rules of play, there can be no force.

If there are runners on second and third, but none on first, the batter cannot force either of them by going to first.

Problems of Batting

Failure to touch base spoils chances.

In the last half of the ninth with the home team one run behind, things begin to happen. With two down the home team managed to get runners on first and third. The batsman hits safely to left. The runner on third jogs home with what appears to be the tying run. In going from first to third, the runner originally on first fails to touch second. Both umpire and players noticed the mistake. The shortstop, after calling for the ball, touches second, and the umpire rules out the runner standing on third. Does the run count?

The run does not count. The failure to touch second made a force play at that base for the third out. The runner who went to third never legally touched second, and the throwing of the ball to that base simply made a force play out of the situation, the ball beating the runner to the bag. Rule 59 states no run can be scored in which the third out is a force play.

Ball seems to be fair but is foul.

Batter hits ball back at the pitcher. It is a low liner that strikes the pitcher's rubber and rebounds back over the foul line midway between home and third base, rolling into the players' bench. Runners were on second and third at the time and both scored, while the batsman went to second. Was that the proper ruling?

Strange as it may seem to some, the drive which rebounded off the rubber and into the players' bench was nothing more than an ordinary foul. The runners should have been sent back to their respective bases and the batter made to hit over. The definition of a fair hit ball says it must settle in fair territory between home and first, or home and third, or that the ball must be on fair ground when bounding to the outfield past first or third base. This particular ball settled on foul territory after bounding over the foul line and out of fair territory midway between home and first base.

Once again the catcher interferes.

With the bases filled and two out, the batsman swings hard and sends up a pop foul fly to the third baseman for what appeared to be the third out. It so happened that the catcher tipped the bat of the batsman as he was about to hit the ball. What is the proper ruling on such a play?

Despite the fact that the batsman's effort was merely a foul fly that was caught did not change the situation. Since the catcher tipped the batter's bat, he created an interference, and such an act permits the batter to go to first, and allows all others to advance when forced. Since the bases were filled at the time, the runner on third scored and the other two runners moved up a base on a foul fly that was caught.

Infield fly that strikes a runner.

Runners are on first and second, one out, when the batter hits a high fly to the infield. The umpire ruled it an infield fly which retired the batsman. A high wind was blowing, making it difficult to judge fly balls. In its descent the ball hit the base-runner, who was standing on second base. The umpire ruled him out for being hit by a batted ball, which retired the side. Were the two rulings on the same hit correct?

The umpire in rendering two such rulings brought about conflicting situations. If he desired to call the batter out on the infield fly, he was perfectly within his rights. On such a play the base-runner, in order to avoid being doubled up, had a right to hold his base. If the umpire was of the opinion that the base-runner hit by the batted ball should be declared out, then he should not have enforced the infield fly rule, for when a base-runner is declared out for being hit by a batted ball, the batsman is entitled to first base. The umpire could have advanced a good reason for declaring either of the two out, but had no right to declare both out on the play.

The batsman after base on balls fails to touch first.

In the last half of the ninth, with two men out, and the score one to nothing against the home team, the batter hits for three bases. With the count three to two on the next batter, the pitcher uncorks a wild pitch for the fourth ball, which gets away from the catcher. The runner on third scores easily, while the batter scampered to first on four balls. In going from the plate to second, he fails to touch first in rounding that bag. The first baseman noticed the error, calls for the ball and touches the bag. The umpire rules the batter out, retiring the side. Does the run count?

Common sense would allow the run. It should count. It is impossible to make a force third out of the play at first, because the base on balls really entitled the batsman to first base. It is impossible to force a man at a base to which the rules state he is legally entitled.

On stepping out of the batter's box.

How strictly do major league umpires enforce the rule that the batsman shall not step out of the box while in the act of hitting the ball? I refer to Rule 50, which states that an illegally batted ball is a ball batted by the batsman when either or both of his feet are upon the ground outside the lines of the batsman's position. For this offense, as I understand it, the batsman should be declared out.

Major league umpires do not enforce the rule to the letter. Nine out of every ten batters have one foot or part of it outside of the lines when they connect with the ball. The batter's stride invariably drives him over the boundary lines. When it is merely a matter of inches it is overlooked. When the batter advances so far out of position that both feet overstep the limit, he is always declared out. In the first case, the force of the swing is the reason; in the second case, it is invariably done to gain an undue advantage.

To award first on fly that is caught.

Batsman strikes at a pitched ball, his effort being a foul fly to the first baseman, which was caught by that player. In striking at the ball the catcher's glove came into contact with the player's bat, thereby interfering with him in getting his proper swing at the ball. What would have been the proper ruling?

The batsman is entitled to first base any time the catcher interferes with him in, or prevents him from striking at, a pitched ball. The fact that the ball was a foul, also that it was caught, had no bearing upon the case. The batsman is entitled to first.

Where ball first hits makes no difference on this play.

Ball hits a yard foul about midway between first and home, and then slowly rolls onto fair territory, and is picked up by the pitcher on fair territory about ten feet from the first base. Is the ball fair or foul?

The ball is fair. It makes no difference where the ball first strikes. It depends on the final resting place of the ball, provided it does not pass first or third base, and if it does, it depends in what territory it happened to be when it passed either base. Rule 44 clearly defines the happening.

Advancing bases on fly that is juggled.

Runners are on second and third, one man is out, batter hits fly to deep left field. Runner on third believes fly will be caught and holds his base, runner on second does not think ball will be caught and starts for third as soon as it is hit. The moment the ball strikes the fielder's hands, the runner on third starts for home. The ball bounds out of the fielder's hands, but he recovers it before it falls to the ground. By a swift accurate throw he manages to get the ball to second before the original occupant of that bag can get back, thereby retiring him for the second out. The ball was then thrown to the third baseman and a triple play claimed, since the runner originally on that base had left the bag before the ball was actually caught. Was a triple play made, or did the run scored from third count?

It was not a triple play, and the run scored from third counted. The moment a fly ball strikes the hands of a fielder, the baserunner has a right to advance, if he has held his base. Otherwise a fielder could juggle a ball as long as he desired, and all the time be rushing in to the infield.

Being hit by a slow pitched ball.

If the batsman is hit by a slow pitched ball, which he plainly attempts to avoid, is he entitled to first base? It is argued that on a slow pitched ball, the batsman is not entitled to first, even though it is impossible for him to get out of the way.

At one time failure of the batsman to get out of the way of a slow pitched ball did not entitle him to first. It was left to the umpire to determine whether or not the ball was a fast one or slow one. Under the present rules the batsman is entitled to first base if he is hit by any pitched ball at which he did not strike, unless in the opinion of the umpire he plainly made no effort to get out of the way of the pitched ball.

This play was not a force third out.

The bases are filled, two are out, batter hits a short fly to left field on which each runner advances a base. The runner who advanced from first to second on the hit was in an excellent position to see the catch. Evidently he thought the left fielder had made a legal catch that made the third out, for he left second and started for first base, his position on the team. In the meantime the batsman had reached first, the runner on second had gone to third, while the man on third had gone home. The umpire ruled that the fielder had trapped the ball, not caught it. The players on the team at bat finally made the runner who had left second, realize the decision, but before he could get back he was tagged out. Did the run count?

The run counted. The third out made at second base was not a force out, as the team in the field contended. The runner having once touched second base became the occupant of that base, thereby eliminating any possibility of a force play. He left the base at his own peril after having become the possessor of it.

Runner was entitled to score.

In the ninth inning, with the score a tie, two men out and a runner on second, the batsman singled sharply to left field. The runner on second, away to a good start, decided to try and score on the hit. The left fielder made a perfect throw to the plate, which had the runner beaten a considerable distance. The runner slid into the plate at full speed. It so happened that the ball took a last bad bound and hopped over the catcher's head. The pitcher of the team in the field was backing up the play. The catcher decided the one thing to do was to keep the runner from touching the plate. He set himself squarely in front of the plate to carry out that idea. Runner and catcher became tangled up and due to the rough actions of the catcher, the runner was tagged out by the pitcher before he was able to touch the plate. Was the runner out or should the score have been allowed?

The runner should have been allowed to score. Under Section 5 of Rule 54, the runner is entitled to advance a base when the obstruction of a fielder prevents him from making a base, unless latter has ball in his hand ready to touch runner.

Coach pulls a bad piece of work.

Two out, runner on first, last half of the ninth. Batter hit a short fly to right, which looked like an easy chance. Runner on first reached third and was rounding the bag for home when the coacher informed him the ball had fallen foul. The runner started to cut across the diamond to go back to first. His team mates finally made him understand the ball was fair. In the meantime the ball had been thrown to the third baseman. The runner originally on first realized there was no chance for him to reach third in safety, neither could he get to first, as the man who hit the ball was standing on that bag. He made a wild dash for second and reached it before being touched with the ball. He was later touched with the ball in the hands of the shortstop, while he was standing on the bag. Was the runner safe or out?

The runner was out, even though he was standing on second base when touched with the ball. Under Rule 52, the base-runner the moment he touched third base became the occupant of that bag. Getting back to second did not exempt him from being put out, third base alone insured him safety. It was a prize "bone" on the part of the coacher.

Failure to touch first causes trouble.

The score is five to four against the home team, it is the last half of the ninth and a runner is on second and two men out. With three balls and two strikes on the batter, the pitcher threw a low ball at which the batter swung and missed. The ball got away from the catcher and rolled a considerable distance. The coacher at first noticed this and urged the batter to try for second. On recovering the ball the catcher threw badly to second. During the mixup, the runner originally on second scored, while the batsman continued on to third and eventually scored, when a bad peg was made to that base. At this stage the first baseman, who had been frantically yelling for the ball, made it known that the batsman who had struck out had missed first base in making the circuit. Getting the ball he touched first base. The umpire declared the batter out. Does the run scored by the man originally on second stand?

The run does not score. The failure of the batsman who had struck out to touch first base made the play at that base a force third out, and on such plays no runs can score.

Man apparently scored but didn't.

Two are out in the last half of the ninth, and the score is 9 to 1 against the home team. The batter singles. He steals second and third unmolested on the first two balls pitched. Since his run had no direct bearing on the result, no attention was paid to his efforts. Some wag in the bleachers suggested he steal home. Acting on the suggestion he dashed for the plate as the pitcher started his windup. The pitcher decided to let him complete the theft and purposely continued to wind up, until the runner slid across the plate in safety. Before he actually delivered the ball to the batter, the runner who had stolen home was half way to the bench. The batsman hit the ball when it was finally delivered and went out on a fly to left field, which retired the side and ended the game. Does the run count?

This run does not count. The play is based on Rule 59, which relates to the scoring of runs. A clause in this rule states, a run shall not be scored, if after touching the first three bases, the runner comes home from third on a play in which the third man is forced out, or is put out before reaching first. The start of the play was when the pitcher started the windup, the completion was the fly to the outfield, which was caught, thus making the batter out before he reached first base.

The run certainly did count.

With the score a tie, team at bat fills bases with two down. With the count three balls and two strikes on the batter, the runners very properly started to advance at top speed, as the pitcher began his windup. The pitch was wide, making the fourth ball. The runner coming home from third seeing the pitch was a ball, slowed up and merely walked toward the plate. The runner originally on second slightly overran third on reaching that bag. A snap throw from the catcher retired him, making the third out. The third out was made before the runner from third had actually crossed the plate. Does the run count?

The run counts. The base on balls to the batter with the bases filled, entitled the runner on third to score. It made no difference whether he had actually crossed the plate or not before the third out was made.

Bonehead work on the coacher's part.

Runner on third, no one out, batter hit to the left of the shortstop, who was forced to go nearly to second to get the grounder. Knowing proper base ball called for the runner on third to hold his base, he gave him little thought. He figured only on making a play at first. Just as he fielded the ball the shouts of his team mates caused him to look toward the plate, and he saw a visiting player running from third at full speed. He made a good throw to the plate, and the catcher touched out the visitor as he slid into the plate, the umpire rendering such a ruling. It then developed that the runner who had been thrown out at the plate was none other than the coacher from third. What about such a play?

The umpire should have declared out the runner originally on third. The rule governing this play states: if, while third base is occupied, the coacher stationed near the base shall run in the direction of home base, or near the base line, while the fielder is making or trying to make a play on a batted ball not caught on the fly, or a thrown ball, and thereby draws a throw to the home base, the base runner shall be declared out for the coacher's interference.

Four interesting queries and the answers.

Here are four queries from one fan which, being often asked, will be answered under one head:

1. With man on first and no one out, the batter strikes out, but ball gets away from the catcher. Catcher recovers ball and throws to second ahead of runner, who advances from first to second on the play. Fielder receiving ball touches base in advance of runner and then throws to first ahead of the batter who had struck out and run to first. How many are out?

2. Runner on first, batter hits ball to first baseman, who fields it and touches first, retiring the runner. He then throws the ball to the second baseman, who touches the base ahead of the runner. Is that sufficient, or must the runner be touched out on such a play?

3. Runner on third. Umpire calls a balk on pitcher. Can runner score from third?

4. Why does not the infield fly rule apply with a runner on first base only?

In Query 1, the runner is safe at second. It is not a force play. The batter is the only man out. Under the rules the batter is automatically out when he strikes out with first base occupied, and less than two out, whether the catcher holds the third strike or not.

In Query 2, the runner is also safe at second. The moment the first baseman touched first and retired the batter, he removed the force at second, making it necessary to touch out the runner.

In Query 3, the runner on third has a right to score. On a balk all base-runners are entitled to advance.

In Query 4, no infield fly is declared with a runner on first, for the reason that there is seldom a chance for a double play, if the batsman runs out his hit.

Once again runner must be touched.

One out, runners on first and second, batsman strikes out, but ball gets away from catcher. Catcher recovers ball and throws to third ahead of runner, who advanced from second, but fielder does not touch runner with the ball. Is the runner out, and are runners forced to advance on such a play?

According to Section 6 of Rule 51, unless two men are already out, the batsman is out if a third strike is called on him when first base is occupied by a runner. Thus, in the above case, the batsman was automatically out when the third strike was called, regardless of the fact that it was not held by the catcher. In such case runners were not forced to advance; they did so at their own risk. The fact that the ball arrived at third ahead of the runner was not enough to retire him; it was necessary to touch him out.

Fielder had a chance to make play.

Runner is on second, batter hits a ball to the shortstop. It is a hard hit ball. One is out at the time. The runner on second starts for third, believing the fielder will not get the ball. The ball gets away from the fielder after he gets it squarely in his hands, and rolls about ten feet away. The shortstop starts after it and the runner collides with him. The decision was that the runner was out because of interference with the shortstop in fielding the ball. Was that proper?

Once the fielder had a chance to make a play on the ball, it killed any chance for an interference play, when the shortstop collided with him as he pursued the ball. If such interference plays were allowed, infielders after making an error on a ball would always purposely try to collide with a runner in order to atone for the misplay.

Team should not suffer for umpire's mistake.

Runner on third, two men out, batter hits a ball which travels down the first base line a yard foul. Runner on third off at the pitch, crosses the plate while the ball is still in foul territory. Umpire believes ball is sure to remain foul and so calls it. The moment he does so, the batsman who is nearing first, stops and hastens back to the plate. The next instant the ball hits something and rolls into fair territory and is a fair ball. First baseman recovers ball, touches first and claims the out. What was the proper ruling?

The umpire was in error, because he ruled too quickly. However, since he declared it a foul ball, he had no recourse other than to stick to his decision. Had he not ruled too quickly, the batsman would have probably continued to first, beaten the play and the runner from third would have scored. In all probability the first baseman would have fielded the ball in foul territory, had not the call of foul by the umpire caused him to cease pursuit. To have changed from foul to fair, after having caused the runners to stop at the call of foul, would have been grossly unfair to the team at bat.

Fielder touched the wrong man.

With runners on second and third and one out, the batsman hit to the shortstop, who threw home to head off the runner from third. The runner from second went to third and the batsman to second in the runup. It so happened that the runner originally on third managed to get back to that base in safety, which created the familiar situation of two runners standing on the same bag at the same time. The third baseman, last to handle the ball, touched with the ball the original occupant of the bag. He then tossed the ball to the pitcher. The moment he did, the runner at third dashed for the plate. He reached it in safety. Was he out or entitled to score?

With two men standing on third, at the same time, the original occupant was the only one exempt from being put out. The third baseman erred in touching the original occupant; he should have touched the runner who advanced from second. No one was out, and the runner who had been touched had a perfect right to score.

Scores on a freak squeeze play.

One out, runner on third, squeeze play is called for. Runner dashes for plate on the pitch, while batter hunts a pop fly in the direction of third. Almost before the ball had met the bat, the runner from third slid safely across the plate. The shortstop made the play on the ball. The coacher believed he would get it and double up runner originally on third. The runner who had crossed the plate, started back to third. The shortstop failed to catch the ball, but got it on the first bound. He tossed it to the third sacker, who touched out the runner, who had once reached the plate, as he slid back into third. What about the play?

It is a peculiar case, yet, an exactly similar one came up in the American League. It was held that the runner who once reached the plate actually scored. The moment he touched the plate he scored, and what happened later had no bearing on the case. Rule 59 covers the play.

A rule that unfortunately is never enforced

Can a balk be called for holding the ball too long after a pitcher gets on the rubber in position to deliver the ball to the batter?

The rules give the umpire the right to inflict such a penalty. It would probably be helpful if the umpire took more advantage of the clause, which gives him the right to call a balk any time in his belief such action on the part of the pitcher unnecessarily delays the game.

Calling a balk suspends play.

Runner on first, pitcher makes a feint to throw to first, but fails to do so, and umpire loudly calls balk. Pitcher then hurriedly throws to plate and batter hits ball over the fence. What should have been the proper ruling?

Such a happening as the above is a very unfortunate one for the umpire. The moment he declared a balk, play ceased. The declaring of the balk entitled the runner on first to advance to second. The fact that the pitcher delivered the ball and the batsman hit it over the fence cannot be given any consideration. The ball was not in play, hence the batsman must hit over again.

Umpire must use his judgment on this one.

Runner on second, the batsman hits the ball to the left of the third baseman, which it seems he will have no difficulty in handling. The shortstop, just as the pitcher was delivering the ball, was in the act of driving the runner on second back to that base by running toward it, as if expecting a throw from the pitcher. The moment the ball was pitched he started toward his own position so as to keep the batter from hitting through the spot he had just vacated. Not more than ten feet from second base the runner collided with the shortstop and both fell to the ground. In the meantime the third baseman had allowed the ball hit right at him to trickle through his hands and roll into left field. The runner regained his feet and managed to reach third in safety. The team in the field contended that the runner should have been declared out, because he interfered with the shortstop, who they insisted would probably have made the play. What about the argument of the team in the field?

When two or more men attempt to field the ball and the base-runner comes into contact with one of them, the umpire shall declare the runner out for coming into contact with a fielder other than the one the umpire determines to be entitled to make the play. From the description, it would seem that it was the third baseman's ball, that the shortstop had no chance of making a play, hence no attention should have been paid to the collision, and the runner allowed to advance at his risk.

Runner from third is out.

Runner is on third, one man is out, squeeze play is called for. The batsman fails to connect and the runner from third would have easily been retired had not the batsman interfered with the catcher in making the play and prevented him from doing so. What would have been the proper ruling, should the batsman or base-runner be declared out, because of the interference?

In this case the runner from third should have been declared out. Section 15 of Rule 56 specifically states, the base-runner is out if with one or no one out and a base-runner on third, the batsman interferes with the play being made at the plate. The idea is to inflict the penalty that will be the most severe, and the calling out of the base-runner kills the chance of a possible score. With two men out if the same play comes up, the batter is made to suffer and he is the one declared out, retiring the side.

Fielder always has right of way.

Batsman hits foul fly that comes down near the bench of his team mates. First baseman makes a play on the ball. Just as the player is about to complete the catch, one of the players tosses out a bat, which strikes the feet of the first baseman with considerable force. He gets the ball squarely in his hands, but drops it, due no doubt to the action of one of the players, who hit him with the bat. The umpire ruled the batsman out. Was he right?

The umpire was perfectly correct in his ruling. The fielder always has the right of way. The action of a player on the bench in striking the fielder with his bat while about to make the catch, certainly constituted an interference.

Can a foul ball be an infield fly?

One out, runners on first and second, batter hits fly ball, which it appears will be caught by the second baseman. The umpire declares it an infield fly. When he so calls it the ball is about thirty feet in fair territory. A high wind is blowing, which eventually carries the ball foul. It is muffed by the second baseman in foul territory. Should the batsman be declared out under the infield fly rule since the ball was in fair territory when he made such a rullug?

The infield fly rule relates only to fair balls. Since the wind carried the ball foul there was nothing for the umpire to do, other than to reverse his original ruling, which declared the batter out on an infield fly and let him hit over again.

Ball in play even though it hit the umpire.

One down, runner on first, batsman hits liner back at pitcher, who merely throws up his gloved hand in self protection. The ball struck the glove squarely and rebounded toward the shortstop. As it passed the umpire it just grazed his trousers. The shortstop recovered the ball, tossed to second, forcing the runner there, and the throw to first beat the batsman. The manager of team at bat argued against the double play, which the umpire allowed, claiming, because the batted ball struck the umpire, it should give the batsman the right to first, and that the runner on first should of course advance to second. What was the proper ruling?

The umpire was right in allowing a double play. Once a fielder has made a play on a ball and touches it, the fact that it later hits the umpire has no bearing on the case.

Runners should have been sent back.

Runner on first, one out, three balls and two strikes on the batter. On the next pitch the runner starts for second. The batter swings and misses the third strike. The catcher makes a perfect throw to second and retires the runner trying to steal. The ball at which the batter swung for the third strike was close and inside. It just grazed his uniform as he struck out. What was the proper ruling? The team in the field claimed a double play.

The batsman is out, if, while attempting a third strike, the ball touch any part of the batsman's person. In all such cases base-runners cannot advance. The umpire should have declared the batsman out and sent the runner, who had apparently been retired, back to first, the base he occupied when the play started.

On passing a preceding runner.

Runner on first, one out, batter hits a deep drive to right field. Runner believes fly will be caught and stops half way between first and second. Batsman feels certain the ball will go safe and tears around the bases at full speed. He passes runner originally on first, while running from first to second. Batsman who hit the ball was able to complete the circuit on the drive, as the fielder was unable to make the catch. What should have been the ruling?

Even though the batsman apparently made a home run, he was out the moment he passed a preceding runner between first and second. This play is covered in Section 16 of Rule 56.

Intent cannot be considered in interference plays.

The bases are filled, two men are out and the batsman hits the ball to the shortstop. The base-runner very properly runs behind the fielder, in order not in any way to interfere. The shortstop gets set for the ball, just as the runner is in the act of passing him from the rear. The fielder at that very moment decides that if he takes another step backward he will be in a better position to handle the ball. The step is disastrous; it results in a collision between fielder and base-runner, both falling to the ground. All three runners score and the batter reaches second. What was the proper ruling on this play?

The umpire should have called the runner going to third out for interference. The fielder always has the right of way and while he may have directly been the cause of the collision, it was the duty of the base-runner to avoid him. In all plays of interference, the intent cannot be considered.

This play nearly came up in world series.

Overflow crowd in right and left field, while in left field a number of fans sit on top of the fence to get a better view of the game. Agreement is that a ball hit into the crowd shall be good for two bases. Batter hits a ball that would have cleared the left field fence. One of the fans sitting on the fence sets himself and tries to catch the ball. It strikes in his hands, but he fails to hold it, and it falls into the overflow crowd. Team in the field contends that the hit is only good for two bases, while the team at bat claims it should be a home run.

The hit should have been allowed a home run, if in the opinion of the umpire, it would have cleared the fence, had it not been for the spectator's interference. Such a happening almost came up in the 1911 world series between New York and Philadelphia at Shibe Park, Philadelphia. The wall at Shibe Park was lined with spectators. One of them almost caught the home run drive which Frank Baker hit off "Rube" Marquard. That hit caused the umpires at once to confer and make a rule to cover the happening. It was agreed that a home run was the only fair solution of the problem.

A fair or foul hit is determined by the location of the ball and not that of the fielder.

Line drive is hit outside of third base; third baseman has foot on bag, when he reaches out and knocks down the ball. Is it a fair hit?

The hit is foul. Read Rule 44.

Why ball is called foul when it hits batsman standing in his box.

Why is it that when a batter hits a ball directly in front of the plate, and it then bounds up and hits the batsman, before he starts away, that the ball is invariably called a foul?

The position assumed by the batter is always in foul territory, so that even though the ball first hits fair it must be in foul territory to hit the batter, who has not left his position, hence is always called a foul ball.

Fielding balls on restricted territory.

Overflow crowd causes ropes to be stretched, making a ground rule necessary, that hits into the overflow should go for two bases. At one end of the stretched rope there were no fans. Batsman hits ball to right center. The fielder backs up against the rope. When it becomes apparent that he can make the catch, if he jumps over the rope which is about two feet high, he does so and makes the catch. What should have been the ruling?

Later in the game a batsman hits a ball to the right fielder. Just as he gets the ball into his hands and makes the catch, he crashes against the ropes and falls backward into the overflow crowd. How about this play?

In the first case, the umpire should not have allowed the out, but granted the batsman two bases. The ropes acted as the end of the playing field, and a catch made outside the boundary limitations was not legal.

In the second case, the out should have been allowed, as the completion of the catch was made on the playing field. No consideration should be given to the fact that the fielder later fell over the ropes.

Relative to substitution of pinch hitters.

Pitcher suffers a broken finger in the third inning, but same not being on his pitching hand, he finished out the inning. In the fourth inning, with runners on second and third, and one out, it was the pitcher's turn to bat. An extra catcher was sent in to bat for the pitcher. At the close of the inning, the manager decided to use an entirely new battery. He put in a pitcher to replace the injured pitcher, for whom the extra catcher had acted as a pinch hitter, and decided to substitute the extra catcher in place of the regular backstop. In the original lineup the catcher had batted seventh and the pitcher ninth. How should the new battery have hit?

Since the extra catcher, who had acted as pinch hitter, was pressed into the game as a regular, it became necessary that during the remainder of the game he continue to bat in the same place as the original pitcher, ninth. That of course made it necessary that the substituted pitcher bat in the position of the original catcher, which was seventh.

The infield fly rule does not apply when there is a runner on first only.

After reading the so-called infield fly rule regarding runners on first and second bases and on first, second and third bases, I do not see any mention made when there is a runner on first only. What happens when that is the case?

If there is a runner on first only and a fly is batted to the infield, the general rules of Base Ball follow. In other words, it is not necessary for the umpire to announce either "batter out" or "infield fly." Same applies with a runner on first and one on third, second base being vacant. The reason is that there is not a chance for a double play if the batsman runs out his hit.

Spectator's interference makes trouble.

There is an overflow crowd, which makes a ground rule necessary on thrown and batted balls. It is agreed that a throw into the crowd shall be good for two bases. Late in the game, with the score a tie, first batter for the home team hits for two bases. The next batter bunts down the first base line. The first baseman rushes in, gets the ball, and makes a hurried throw to third to get the runner. A perfect throw would have turned the trick, but the throw is high and gets away from the third baseman. It rolls perhaps thirty feet. The third baseman rushes for the ball, as does a fan sitting in the front row of the overflow crowd. The ball is practically motionless when the fan picks it up and rushes back to cover in the crowd. The runner dashes from second to the plate, and the batter scores, while the third sacker attempts to regain the ball. The manager of the team at bat contends both runners should score because it is a blocked ball. Later he insists the runner should score and the batter go to second because the ball went into the crowd. What should have been the ruling?

The umpire should have granted the batsman first and allowed the runner on second to advance to third. Rule 37, Section 3, states if a person not engaged in the game should retain possession of a blocked ball, or throw or kick it beyond the reach of the fielders, the umpire shall call time and require both runners to stop at the base last touched by him.

Batsman is out when with two strikes he strikes at and misses the ball which hits him.

There are runners on second and third bases and one out. In attempting a third strike, the batter missed the ball, which came into contact with his person. The catcher also missed the ball, the runners on second and third scoring and the batter reaching second base. What was the proper ruling?

When the missed third strike came into contact with the person of the batsman, he was automatically retired. On such a play no bases can be run, so that the two men who scored should have been sent back to their original bases.

With runner on first and not two out, batsman is automatically out whether third strike is caught or not.

With a runner on first base and one out, the catcher drops the third strike. The runner goes to third and the batter to second. The catcher throws the ball to third base and claims an out on the ground that the runner had no right to advance, as the batter was out and the runner should have remained at first.

The batter was out, but the runner can get as far as he is able to run.

The final resting place of the ball determines whether a hit is fair or foul.

If the batsman hits a ball that first strikes several feet in foul territory and then rolls into fair territory, finally settling on fair territory, between first and home, is it a fair or foul ball?

It is a fair ball, despite the fact that it first hit foul. The status of the hit is determined by where the ball finally settles, which was on fair territory.

Batsman stepping out of box when pitcher is in position.

Can a batsman step out of the batter's box after the pitcher is standing on the rubber?

He is not supposed to do so, but conditions frequently arise that make it necessary. He should appeal to the umpire, who will call time if the pitcher has not started his delivery.

How players assume their positions in the batting order when, after first acting as pinch hitters, they become regular substitutes.

Manager of team at bat sends his star pitcher, who is a good hitter, to bat in place of the player doing the catching. At the close of the inning he decides to shift his battery, sending in a new pair. He selects his star pitcher, who was used as a pinch hitter, to do the pitching and another catcher to do the receiving. How will these two players bat in the line-up?

The star pitcher will continue to bat in the position of the catcher in whose place he batted, while the new catcher will bat in the pitcher's position in the line-up.

Batter can never go to first base when the umpire calls a balk.

What effect does the calling of a balk by the umpire have on the batter? Can the batter at any time go to first base on a balk?

The calling of a balk has no effect whatever on the batsman. It relates only to the base-runner, or runners, entitling each runner to advance a base without liability to be put out.

When batsman throws bat at ball in fair territory interference is constituted.

Runner on first base, batter attempting to sacrifice bunts the ball down the third base line. Just as the catcher is about to make a play on the ball, the batsman so throws his bat that it comes into contact with the ball, knocking it thirty feet into foul territory. Runner on first reaches third base, while the batsman goes to second. What is the proper ruling on the play?

The batsman should be declared out for interference and the runner who reached third should be sent back to his original base, which was first base.

Right of the base-runner to leave the line to avoid interference with a fielder whose right of way is privileged.

Has a base-runner the right to run considerably more than three feet out of the line, to avoid colliding with a fielder about to make a play on a batted ball?

The base-runner certainly has such a right, provided the fielder has not the ball in his hands ready to touch him. As a matter of fact, the runner must so run that he will not collide with the fielder, under penalty of being called out for interference.

An attempt to bunt is a strike even if the batsman does not touch the ball if there is no one out.

There is no one out and two strikes on the batter. The latter attempts to bunt the ball but misses it. The catcher also misses the ball. The batsman runs to first base but is called out by the umpire. Was the umpire right?

The batsman was not out. He became a base runner immediately after three strikes had been called by the umpire. Had the batsman bunted a foul on the third strike he would have been out, but his attempt to bunt—even though he missed the ball—was as if he had swung freely at the ball. If the catcher failed to hold the third strike, the batsman becoming a base-runner, must proceed to first base. If he arrived there in advance of the ball he was safe.

Batsman should be given reasonable time to regain his balance if he slips when swinging at the ball.

Batsman swung very hard at the second strike and, slipping, staggered back three or four steps. Before he had recovered his balance and could return to the batsman's box the pitcher delivered the ball and the batsman was called out on strikes. Was the umpire right?

Technically he was. The literal construction of the rule gives the umpire no alternative than to call a strike if the batsman has begun his turn at bat. On the other hand, if the umpire was satisfied that the batsman was a victim of an accident—in other words, had slipped out of position—it would have been permissible for him to suspend play.

The umpire must use his judgment if the batter deliberately walks out of the box.

In the last half of the seventh (and final) inning, the game being shortened by mutual agreement, with the score 7-5 in favor of the team in the field, no runs, two hands out, two strikes and no balls on the batter, the latter walked out of his box. The pitcher threw the ball and the umpire called a strike, which retired the side and ended the game. The losing team protested. If the protest was sustained it was a question whether the game was to start again where it had terminated in the seventh inning, with two strikes and no balls, or whether the game should be played from the start.

If the batsman did not ask the umpire to suspend play for some cause of more than ordinary importance, a protest of the game should never have been considered. In all that is related above the umpire is sole judge.

Runner can steal a base on a foul tip that is caught.

Can a runner steal a base on a foul ball which is also the second strike?

If a foul tip, yes. If a foul fly, he should hold first base until after the ball is caught.

1. Impossible to make a force-out at a base to which the runner is entitled.
2. No run can be scored on third out in which the batsman fails to reach first.

Please state the difference between these two plays, which seem very similar:

No. 1—Runner on third, two men out, three balls and two strikes on the batter. The delivery was a wild pitch, making the fourth ball, entitling the runner to first base. The ball rolled almost to the grand stand. The batsman raced to second base, while the runner on third scored. In running to second, the batsman failed to touch first base. The ball was thrown to that base and the umpire declared an out, making the third out and retiring the side. Does the run count?

No. 2—Runner on third, two men out, two strikes and three balls. The batter swings at the next delivery and misses, but the ball gets away and rolls almost to the grandstand. The runner on third scores and the batsman reaches second. As in the other case, the batsman fails to touch first base on his way to second. The ball is thrown to first base, and the umpire declared the runner on second out, making the third out and retiring the side. Does the run count?

In play No. 1, the run surely does count. The batsman who received a base on balls is entitled to first base, and the throwing of the ball to that base, which he missed on his way to second, retires him, but is not a force-out.

In play No. 2, the run does not count. When the batsman who struck out, and who failed to touch first base on his way to second, was retired by having the ball thrown to the base missed, it made the third out, and a run cannot score on a play in which the third man be put out before reaching first.

Position of ball determines whether fair or foul.

A fly was batted just within the right field foul line. The right fielder had one foot on foul territory and one foot on fair territory when he caught the ball. The umpire said it was a foul because the fielder had one foot on foul territory although the ball was plainly over fair ground. Was the umpire right?

No. The position of the fielder has nothing to do with a decision of this kind. It is the position of the ball which must govern the umpire as to whether the hit is fair or foul. If the ball is outside the foul line and the fielder on fair ground it is a foul. If the ball is over fair ground and the fielder outside the foul line, it is a fair hit.

Umpire decides home run on boundary fence.

A long fly was batted into the stand in right field. The ball passed over the fence between the stand and the field on fair ground but it curved after passing the fence and dropped foul. Was it a foul ball or a fair ball?

The new rules would make it a fair ball. The umpire is no longer required to give a decision on a hit where he last sees the ball, but where he noted it when it passed the boundary fence.

Bunted fair fly not an infield fly.

The batter bunted and lifted a fair fly into the air. Was it an infield fly?

See Rule 51, Section 8. The umpire is not to call it an infield fly.

A ground rule is arbitrary and a runner may advance only to the limit of bases allowed by the rule.

Ground rule provided for two bases on a hit. Runner does not remain at second, but goes home. Can he be put out?

No. Send him back to second. The ground rule is arbitrary.

If a backstop is at the legal distance, runner may make as many bases as possible if fourth ball is a wild pitch.

Fourth ball is a wild pitch and batter-runner goes to second base. Has he such right?

Yes, if the backstop is the legal distance from the plate and the runner can reach second without being touched out.

When a balk is called each base-runner is entitled to advance one base, regardless of his station.

There are runners on first and third bases. In attempting to catch the runner on first napping, the pitcher makes a balk. Is the runner on third base entitled to score?

The runner on third certainly is entitled to score, and the runner on first should advance to second. A great many people seem to have the impression that a run cannot score on a balk. That is wrong.

When there is a runner on first base and the batsman is retired prior to the runner, there no longer can be a force play.

Runner is on first base, also runner on third base, one man out. The batsman hits a grounder to the second baseman, and a double play that will cut off the run looks certain. Shortstop is slow in covering, and the second baseman throws the ball to first, getting the batter. When the runner advancing from first gets within about thirty feet of second, he stumbles and falls. The first baseman throws the ball to the shortstop, who has finally covered second and the runner is touched out as he slides into that base, completing a double play and retiring the side. The runner on third had scored long before the third out was made. Does the run count?

The run does count. The moment the batsman was retired at first base, there was no longer a chance for a force play on the runner trying to reach second base. If said runner had cared to, and could have gotten back in safety, he could have returned to first base. There was nothing that forced him to continue on his way to second after the batsman had been retired.

Definition of infield fly.

Please define the infield fly rule. It seems to be misunderstood by the umpires in our industrial league. They insist there are two ways to rule upon it.

The change in the rules which was made February 10, 1920, should help every umpire to understand the "infield fly" rule without trouble in the future. Section 8 of Rule 51 now reads: "If before two hands are out, when first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, the batter hit a fair fly (note the word 'fair') other than a line drive that can be handled by an infielder, he is out. In such case the umpire shall, as soon as the ball be hit, declare it an infield or outfield hit." Now comes an addition to the rule that makes it much clearer than before: "The runners may be off their bases or advance at the risk of the ball being caught, the same as on any other fly ball." This change will make customs uniform in all leagues.

When base umpire is hit by batted ball the batsman is entitled to first base, but no bases are run unless forced.

Runner on first. Batter raps the ball through the infield and it hits the base umpire, bounding from him to the shortstop, who touches second, and the runner from first is called out on force. Ruling by an expert is that the ball is not in play. Is that correct?

Rule 55, Section 6, reads: "The base-runner shall return to his base without liability to be put out if the umpire be struck by a fair hit ball before touching a fielder; in which case no base shall be run unless necessitated by the batsman becoming a base-runner and no run shall be scored unless all the bases are occupied."

Runner from first was forced.

One runner is forced out but the other is not.

There are base-runners on first and second bases with no one out. The next batter raps a fly to the outfield, where it is muffed. The fielder throws the ball to second base and the second baseman throws it to third base, as both runners move up when the ball is muffed. The throw arrives at second base ahead of the runner from first base, but it does not arrive at third base ahead of the runner from second. Give the correct ruling.

The runner from first base to second base is out. He was forced when the fly hit was muffed, and as the ball arrived at second in advance of him no other ruling could be legal. The runner from second base to third base is not out, as he arrived at third base after the force play had been eliminated. If the fielder had first thrown the ball to third base the force would have begun there and it would have been possible to retire the runner at second base in a double play if a supplementary throw reached the latter base before the runner.

Batting out of turn.

When it came time for the sixth batter in the list to go to the plate the seventh man went to bat in his place and made a hit; then No. 6 discovered the mistake and went to bat, whereupon the umpire called him out for batting out of turn. Should not No. 7 come back to bat, since No. 6 was out, or should he stay on first as a result of his hit?

Batsman No. 6 was out for not batting in his turn. If this is the third man out the proper batsman in the next inning is the player who would have come to bat had the players been put out by ordinary play in the preceding inning; No. 7 would thus come up again, to bat in his regular turn. If not the third man out, the game stands as it is being played, with No. 6 out and No. 7 is the next batter.

Another version of alleged force-out.

Runner on first base when batter hits for three bases; batter being faster than the other man, he reaches third base before man ahead gets home; ball is thrown to catcher, who touches home base before runner gets there and umpire calls runner out, claiming a force; this decision was disputed and broke up the game; give correct decision.

The umpire's ruling was absurd. Very frequently a slow runner is ahead of two speedy ones. There is no reason why a force can exist because one man can run faster than another. As repeatedly stated, there is no force play in Base Ball except it begins by the batter pushing the next runner, the next two runners or the next three runners ahead of him.

When the infield fly rule is applied.

One out; man on first base and man on third base; batter hits infield fly which by ordinary playing could be caught. Is it compulsory for the batter to run to first base and the man on first to try for second?

The infield fly rule does not apply under the conditions outlined. First and second, or first, second and third must be occupied before the rule can apply. In case the batsman did not run out the hit, or the runner on first held that base, the fielder had the opportunity to drop the ball, throw it to second and so to first for a double play.

Rule 53, section 4, covers what should be done.

Batter has two strikes and three balls. The next pitched ball strikes batsman on the arm. Umpire calls it "dead ball" and brings the batsman to bat over, calling it neither ball nor strike, on the ground that he tries purposely to get hit. Was umpire right or wrong in his ruling, and is there any specific rule in the book covering this particular play?

For every fairly delivered ball the umpire must call a strike; if unfairly delivered he must call a ball. If the ball was fairly delivered and the player purposely got in the way of it, the umpire should have called him out for interference. If it was unfairly delivered, it was a dead ball. All balls that hit batsman are dead balls.

If he had hit the ball he would have been out, because he was not within the lines of his position.

Batter runs toward the pitcher out of the batter's box and strikes at the ball but misses it. Is he out?

He is not, if he failed to bat the ball.

Batter can be removed at any time.

Sixth inning; batter has taken two strikes, when team captain halts game, takes batter out and sends in substitute, who takes third strike and is out. Is this in accordance with rules?

Yes, batter can be removed at any time.

It is not too late.

If, when a batter has two strikes and two balls charged against him, it is found that he is batting out of turn, is he out, or does the rule mean that the right batter shall be substituted immediately if the mistake is discovered?

The rule says the right batter shall be substituted at once.

Depends on where it stops before reaching first or third bases.

Batter bunts the ball on fair ground; it rolls foul and then back inside the diamond before reaching third base. He hits another ball to foul ground, and it rolls on fair ground before reaching third base and remains there. What are these two hits?

Both hits are fair.

Must show exactly where rule was violated.

After a baseman has called the attention of the umpire to the fact that he should watch all of the bases when a batter seems to have made a three-base hit or a home run, should the umpire call the batter out if he fails, for instance, to touch second base?

Not unless the fielding side makes a play on second base showing that someone knows the batter forgot to touch second on his way around the bases.

The batter receives credit for a safe hit nevertheless.

If two hands are out and a runner from first base to second base is hit by a batted ball, is the batter credited with a base hit, even though it is the third out?

The batter always receives a base hit, no matter what the status of the game may be, if a runner is hit by a batted ball.

Umpire certainly did not understand "infield fly" rule.

With men on first and second and one out, batsman hits a foul fly between third and home and the shortstop tries to catch the ball but drops it. The umpire rules the batsman out, under the infield fly rule. Was he right?

Rule 51, Section 8, says: "The batsman is out if, before two hands are out, while first and second, or first, second and third bases are occupied, he hit a fly ball, other than a line drive, that can be handled by an infielder. In such case the umpire shall, as soon as the ball be hit, declare it an infield or outfield fly." It is very evident that this rule is intended to apply where there is a possibility of a double play. As there could be no double play on a trapped foul fly, the umpire was wrong.

When batter can change from right to left, or vice versa.

Batter after having one strike called on him changed to opposite side of plate, while pitcher had ball but was not in box ready to pitch. Was batter out? Also, batter turned his back to pitcher and refused to swing at ball, but did not leave batter's box; umpire called him out. Was umpire's decision correct? While batter was standing with his back to the plate, pitcher delivered ball which hit him, though he tried to get out of the way of it. Was batter out or was he entitled to his base?

Batter can change to opposite side of plate if he does it before pitcher is in position to pitch. Fact that batter turned his back to plate or pitcher did not penalize him. Umpire should call ball or strike, as the case may be, and if he attempted to get out of the way of a pitched ball and still was hit he should be given his base, but it hardly seems reasonable that a batter acting in such a manner made a real try to avoid being hit. It would be for the umpire to say. In either case, however, the umpire has no authority to call the batsman out.

A play often misunderstood.

In running the last half of the distance from home plate to first base, while the ball is being fielded to first base, can the runner step outside the three-foot limit line?

Yes; as long as his doing so does not interfere with the play at first base.

Batter cannot change while pitcher is in act of delivery.

With three balls and two strikes against the batter, the latter, who is hitting from the right side of the plate, goes over to the left as the pitcher delivers the ball. The batter thinks it will be the fourth ball and keeps on toward first base. Is he not out under the rule which forbids the batter to go from one box to the other while the pitcher is in the act of delivering the ball?

He certainly is. He has no right to change his position on the theory that the pitcher is delivering a bad ball. He must wait until the umpire says it is a bad ball.

Walking into a pitched ball.

Batter is hit by pitched ball; opposing side claims he intentionally walked into ball and umpire calls it a strike. Should it be called a ball or should batter be called out or allowed to take his base?

If batter swung at it or if it was over the plate and a fair pitch it would be a strike; otherwise a ball. Batter is not out for allowing ball to hit him, unless he does so in a manner to interfere with catcher making a play.

Batter had already reached first safely, but was ambitious.

With two hands out and a runner on second base the batter hits safely to right field. He is put out trying for a two-base hit, but the runner scores. Does the run count?

It does, if the runner crossed home before the runner from first base to second base was put out.

When a foul tip is not a foul tip.

Batter had two strikes and two balls, the next ball delivered was fouled off, going on a direct line to the catcher, who could not get his hands up in time to stop it. Ball went between the chest protector and the catcher's body. Umpire said batter was entitled to another strike, as the ball was not legally caught. Was he right?

Batsman was not out and was entitled to another chance to hit the ball. It was not a foul tip as defined by Rule 46, because it was not "legally caught." Section 3 of Rule 51, defining "When Batsman is Out," specifically states under what conditions a batsman is out on a foul, but also makes the following exception: "Provided it be not caught in a fielder's cap, protector, pocket or other part of his uniform," etc.

The umpire had read his rule book.

Runner on third; man at bat tries to squeeze the runner home; he strikes at the ball and misses it; the ball hits the batsman and the runner on the way home is touched by the catcher. The umpire sends the runner back to third and calls a strike on the batter. Is this right?

Sure.

Catch finished it, so far as play from batter was concerned.

Runners on first and third; with one out, batsman hits outfield fly, which is caught; man on third scores after catch, but man on first is caught before he gets back, making third out on the play. Does run count?

Run certainly counts if man from third crosses plate before play at first retiring the side is completed.

Penalty goes, if there was contact between glove and ball.

Infielder threw glove at batted ball; umpire gave runner three bases; game protested, claiming Section 6, Rule 54, does not apply, as glove did not stop ball.

Rule is in force if glove touched the ball, regardless of whether it stopped ball or not.

A strike is a strike, even if it is a foul tip.

Can a base-runner steal second base when a foul tip is made which is also the second strike?

He can, if the ball is caught, as a foul tip is a strike under the ruling laid down by the Rules Committee.

The rule is not interpreted literally under these circumstances.

With two strikes against him the batter strikes at the next ball. Thinking it is caught, he takes two steps toward the bench; then discovering that the catcher missed the ball, runs in safety to first base. Can he be called out for running out of the line?

No; he was safe.

Where the umpire was in error; batter was out.

Batter hits line drive to pitcher, who stops the ball with one hand and it rolls a short distance and touches the umpire. The pitcher picks up the ball and throws the batter out at first, but the umpire calls the runner safe. Is that ruling correct?

No. Read Rule 54, Section 1, as follows: "The base-runner shall be entitled without liability to be put out to advance a base if a fair hit ball strike the person or clothing of the umpire or a base-runner on fair ground before touching a fielder." The ball first touched a fielder and was at once in play and could be fielded upon recovery to any portion of the diamond. This rule has often been incorrectly interpreted.

Plays hinging on the infield fly.

Runners were on first, second and third bases, with one out; batter knocked infield fly, which umpire called while the ball was in the air; second baseman caught fly and tagged the runner at second, who was off the bag. Should this runner be called out, or was the play completed when umpire called "infield fly, batter out"? With a runner on first and second bases, the batter missed the last strike, which the catcher dropped, umpire calling batter out. Can a double play be made in such a case, that is, catcher to third to first, after missing last strike?

Runner was out at second, the play being the same as on any other fly ball, except that batter is automatically out. Batsman is out (see Rule 51, Section 6); if the man on second base attempted to steal third on third strike and was touched out a double play could not be made on the theory that the runner on second is forced at third. The batsman is automatically out, removing the force.

Umpire was not up on the rules.

With runner on third, batter swings at ball but the catcher's glove was in the way of the bat and the bat hit the ball and the glove together, the ball rolling foul. The umpire allowed the runner to score from third. Was he right?

No. If the catcher interfered, the batter was allowed to take first base, but unless a force play followed, because runners were on third, second and first, the runner on third could not be allowed to advance.

A sacrifice is such, no matter where the advancement of base-runner took place.

Is a batter entitled to a sacrifice if he purposely advances the runner from second to third?

Yes. The play is exactly the same as when the runner is advanced from first to second.

What has third strike to do with third base?

With a base-runner on third base the batter strikes out and the team in the field claims that the runner on third base is out and the batter safe because the third strike is dropped by the catcher.

Nonsense. That is the wrong application of a rule which has nothing to do with third base but with first base.

A foul tip is not a "foul."

Two strikes on batter and on the next pitch he is out on a foul tip, held by the catcher; runner steals base on the strike-out, but umpire says he cannot advance on foul and sends him back. Was decision correct?

Umpire was wrong; a foul tip is not a foul, but merely continuation of strike, and ball is still in play and bases can be run on it the same as if ball had not been tipped by bat.

Once more the force play commands attention.

Runner on first base and the batter bats the ball to the second baseman, who attempted to touch the runner from first between first and second. The runner stopped on the line, however, and the second baseman then threw the ball to the first baseman, retiring the batter. The first baseman then threw the ball to the shortstop at second base. The ball reached the shortstop ahead of the runner, but the fielder failed to touch the runner. Was the latter out and could he return to first under such a play?

He was not out. He could return to first. The moment that the batter was put out at first there was no longer a force play and the runner who had been at first was at liberty to go where he pleased, so long as he was not touched by some one who had the ball in his hand. There never can be a force play on the field after the batter is first put out. This seems to be the one question which bothers all young players and some old ones. It is argued about constantly, yet it must be evident that when the batter is retired base-runners can move at their will on the base lines.

If two were out, it was a force at first.

First and second bases occupied; batter strikes out and catcher lets third strike get away; batter goes to first base, but neither of other runners left their bases.

The rule is perfectly plain. If less than two were already out the batter is out, whether the catcher held the ball or not.

Runner certainly was entitled to return to first base.

Runner on first base and batter hits grounder to pitcher; runner on first runs about two feet off first base. Pitcher throws the ball to first baseman, who touches his base and throws to second. Runner, instead of going to second, returns to first base. Was he entitled to do so?

As soon as the batsman was retired at first base, the force play was lost and therefore the runner could return to first safely.

Everyone can run, at his own risk, of course.

Two men on base, second and third; one out. Batter receives four balls, but catcher misses last ball. Is the man on third entitled to score on passed ball or does he remain on third?

Man on third is entitled to score on the passed ball, provided he can do so. If catcher misses fourth ball, runners on bases, as well as batsman who was passed, may go as far as they can.

There was no force-out at home plate.

Bases full, no one out and the third strike is called on batter; catcher drops ball but immediately picks it up and touches home plate, then tags batter and throws to first baseman, who tags first base-runner who is returning to first base; umpire calls batter out (I suppose by Rule 51, Section 6) and man tagged while not in contact with first base out; players in the field claimed three men out, third base-runner also, asserting that third base-runner was forced.

Umpire was right; batsman and man caught off first base are out.

Umpire should read Rule 59.

With a runner on second and one on third and one out, a fly ball is batted to the left fielder. Runner on second starts for third. The runner on third holds the base until the ball is caught and runs home. The coacher sends the runner back to second who had started for third. He is caught out at second for the third out. Before this takes place the runner from third has reached home. Does his run count? The umpire said no.

Yes.

It was "love's labor lost"; some players never read the rules.

With the bases filled and no one out, the catcher drops the ball and tries to throw the runner out at second base, but fails to do so, and the second baseman then tries to get the batter at first, but the umpire calls the batter out before leaving home plate. Is the umpire right?

Most assuredly. The rule states explicitly that the batter is out if the catcher drops the ball unless there are two hands out. The catcher was foolish to throw the ball, evincing a lack of knowledge as to the rules, and the second baseman was equally at fault when he tried to retire the batter at first base. The latter was out the moment that he made the third strike, and the umpire was perfectly correct in his ruling.

More about the infield fly rule.

Runners on first and second; batted ball hits umpire and runner from second scores and runner from first goes to third; umpire calls batter safe and calls runners back to bases they started for. Runner on first; batter hits infield fly to second baseman, and runner from first was touched on second base; umpire calls this runner back to first base and batter out under infield fly rule.

In the first instance umpire was right; there can be no advance further than to make room for the batter. In the second question umpire misinterpreted infield fly rule, as is plain enough if rule is read. Batter was out if fly ball was caught and runner from first would be out if he left base before ball was caught.

Note the words in *italic*.

If a batsman *in his box* hits a ball, which strikes fair, and the ball bounces up and hits him while he is still in his box, is the batsman out?

No; foul ball.

This is very plain; see Rule 51, Section 1.

Smith bats in place of Jones and the umpire calls Smith out for batting out of turn and then allows Jones to bat. Is that right?

No. Jones is out for not batting in proper turn. The proper batsman is always the one to be declared out in a batting-out-of-order play.

This raised quite a controversy.

In the first game of double header, when Chicago went to bat in the ninth inning Philadelphia was leading, 3 to 2. Mayer struck out one Chicago player in the ninth, then Schulte singled and Zimmerman doubled. Schulte stopped at third. Alexander was then substituted for Mayer. Under orders, Alexander walked Saier purposely, filling the bases. Then Williams hit to Luderus, who threw to the plate, forcing Schulte. Killifer tried for a double play, but Williams beat his throw to first. Then Luderus threw to third in an attempt to catch Zimmerman off base. The throw was wild and Zimmerman and Saier both scored, winning the game for the Cubs. Phelan fled to Paskert. Who is charged with the defeat?

The loss of the game is charged against Alexander. It was while Alexander was pitching that Saier reached first and eventually scored. The custom is that when a pitcher retires, leaving runners on bases, and these runners later score off the relieving pitcher, they must be charged up against the first pitcher. It would be manifestly unfair to ask the second pitcher to go in at a trying time and prevent the scoring of runners already on bases. While this was not exactly the position of play presented in this game, nevertheless Alexander's responsibility began with the first batsman he pitched to and it was this batsman that did score the winning run.

Runner out if the ball touches the ground in the hand of the first baseman but is securely held.

In a game the ball was thrown to the first baseman by the shortstop to retire the base-runner. The first baseman dropped the ball, but, stooping quickly, held it in his hand, although the ball rested on the ground. Was the batsman base-runner out?

This is a play which is best seen by the umpire to be judged correctly. If the baseman firmly held the ball in his hand, even though the ball might rest on the ground, the batsman who had become a base-runner would be out. The umpire is the judge of the firmness with which the ball is held.

Runner on third base is not privileged to score without liability to be put out because the batsman is automatically out on strikes.

Runners are on first, second and third. No one out. The batsman strikes at the ball and misses it on the third strike and the catcher drops the ball. The runner on third base leaves the base and tries to score, but is tagged out by the catcher. The umpire allows this decision and also calls the batter out. Is he right?

Yes. The runner on third base left the base at his own risk. The batter was out under the rule governing such a case. The runner at third should have known the rule.

Umpire must determine interference after a missed third strike.

Runners on second and third bases, two out, third strike (batter swinging) missed by catcher, bat hits ball while still in the air after bounding from catcher's hands, rolls foul between first base and home plate. Runners score and batter goes to first. Is that right?

If batter deliberately interfered he could be called out (Rule 56, Section 1). If he did not interfere deliberately, neither he nor runners are to be punished because catcher muffs ball. Umpire's judgment must prevail.

No rule permits a base-runner to be deprived of possession of the base to which he is legally entitled. If a runner from first goes to second, and a runner who is entitled to second remains on that base, the latter cannot be put out and the runner from first be permitted to hold the base. It is the runner from first who can be touched out for not being on his base.

This holds good of a like play on third base.

Problems of Base Running

May not run bases in reverse order.

Although there was no reason for so doing, but as a joke, one of our players ran back to first base after he had touched second. Is there any penalty?

Yes. In the future, however, there will be little of this fun, because a new section—section 2—has been added to Rule 52, which makes it possible to put the runner out.

Substitute runner's status depends upon whether captain of team in field gave consent for him to run.

First man at bat received a base on balls. After he had touched first base a runner was substituted for him. The runner reached third base later, but after he had arrived at third base it was his turn to bat. Could another runner be substituted for him?

The runner first substituted, unless he were permitted to run by consent of the captain of the opposing team, was out of the game the moment that his term as substitute runner was fully completed. That would happen when he was put out or when his own side was put out. If the captain of the team in the field had granted permission to this substitute to run, from necessity he would be compelled to follow this permission up by permitting him to bat while another runner took his place. All depends upon whether the captain of the team in the field had given permission.

It is against the rules to cut the bases while trying for a run.

A base-runner is on second base and starts to steal third as the pitcher delivers the ball to the batsman. The latter hits a fly to the field. The runner who had started to steal third and had touched the base thinks the ball may be caught and attempts to retrace his way to second base. The fielder misses the fly ball and thereupon the runner, without trying to touch third base, again leaves the base line between second and third bases and goes home. The umpire called the runner safe, but could he do so in view of the fact that the runner had not retouched third base?

The umpire in this instance was wrong. To score a run the bases must be touched continuously in legal order. The runner had not made his title legal to third base in the first place, because a play was in continuation by which he could have been put out. Rule 56, section 13, says the base-runner is out if, when advancing bases or forced to return to a base while the ball is in play, he fail to touch the intervening base or bases in the regular or reverse order. The ball was in play when he touched third base and to make his run legal it was necessary that he should return to third base and touch it again on his way to home plate. He also ran outside the base line.

This is a puzzler to many, yet perfectly reasonable.

With a runner on second and one on third, and no one out, runner on third tries to steal home and is caught between home and third, the runner from second goes to third and is touched by the third baseman while standing on third base. Who is entitled to the base?

As soon as the preceding runner started to steal home, the runner from second secured a tentative right to third base, which protected him until the runner who had the legal right to that base returned to it. Hence, if both runners while on third base were touched with the ball, the runner from second would be out, for the reason that he had lost his tentative right to that base on the return to it of the preceding runner.

Runner took all the risk.

With a man on third and second, the runner on second, who had taken a lead toward third, was not given time enough to return to his base when the batter failed to hit the ball fair. He contended that he was entitled to go to third, which, of course, would have forced in a run. The rules state very clearly that a runner shall be entitled to take the succeeding base without being put out in case the pitcher does not give him time to return to the base he had occupied.

This rule regarding runners has been quite misunderstood in the above instance. The pitcher was foolish not to see that the runner had not returned to second, and if the runner continued to go to third he did so at his own risk. See Sec. 13 of Rule 56.

Runner can take the chance.

Are runners permitted to advance under the following circumstances: while first and second bases are occupied by runners before two men are out, the batter hits an infield fly which is not caught?

The runners on first and second bases may advance at their own risk. After a batsman has been declared out on the infield fly, the play is just the same as any other fly ball.

The "force rule" explained once more.

One man out; runner on first base and runner on second base; pitcher throws to shortstop at second base; base-runner at second sees he has no chance to get back, so he starts for third. While he is being run up and down the line the runner on first leaves that base and runs to second base, on which he stands. Center fielder comes in and stands beside him to take part in the play, if necessary. Base-runner who has been on second is returning to second, and ball is thrown to center fielder. As he catches the ball the runner coming back to the base falls. Center fielder touches the base-runner standing on second (the man who had come from first) and then steps off the base and touches the base-runner who had been on second originally, as the latter is picking himself up. Umpire decides a double play. Is he correct?

Under Rule 56, Section 9, runner was not out. He was entitled to second base until forced off by return of base-runner from third. This man could not be called out while standing on the base. If both runners were occupying second base, the runner from first would be the one to be declared out.

One runner cannot force the preceding runner off his base.

Runners on second and third; batter hits to shortstop and runner from second goes to third, forcing runner off there; shortstop throws to plate and catcher, thinking it forced run, does not tag runner, but throws to first to catch batter; runner that had touched third goes back to second; umpire calls runner going from third to home out. Was he correct? Runners on second and third; runner on second forces runner off third base; this runner stops on line on way to plate, and catcher, who gets ball, thinks he has given up and throws ball to first base; runner then comes in and touches plate; umpire calls him out. Was he correct?

To start with, get clear in your head that there has been no "force" of runner off third base in either case. One runner cannot force another off his base except to make room for the batter at first. In your first question the runner from third has legally scored, if he was not tagged, and the fact that he scores makes runner from second legal occupant of third base, provided he held base when runner that left it scored. In that case he has no right to run bases in reverse order and return to second and could be tagged out any place off third base. In the second case, there is no such thing as "giving up" on bases, and if runner coming in from third was not tagged his score counts. Umpire was wrong in both decisions.

When a runner is out while standing on his base.

With a runner on third, batter hits a slow bounding ball down third base line. Runner returns to and stands squarely on bag. The third baseman, realizing that he cannot retire the batter at first, allows the ball to roll, thinking it may go foul. The ball rolls to the third-base bag, hits it and, bounding up, strikes the runner, who is declared out under the rule of being hit by a batted ball.

Under the provisions of Section 12 of Rule 56 base-runner was out. The fact that the runner is standing on the base does not alter the rule. For instance, three men might be on bases and two out and the runner standing on first or third might be hit with a fairly batted ball and prevent the fielder from making a play, thus scoring a run, which would certainly be wrong.

No possible reason for calling the runners out in this case.

Runners on first and second when batter hits foul; pitcher gets ball and steps behind plate, then throws over first base; runners, thinking the ball is in play with pitcher in position, advance one base each on his bad throw; first baseman returns ball to pitcher, who steps into position and then throws ball to first and second; one umpire calls runners out and the other umpire sends them back to bases.

The umpire who sent runners back to bases originally held is the one who gave the only sensible decision. Ball was not in play until held by pitcher in position and "play" called by umpire behind plate. Whatever an erratic pitcher may have done with the ball before it is in play does not matter unless the umpire wants to fine him for delaying the game.

Base-runner struck by thrown ball while running him down.

Base-runner is caught between first and second; in running him down, as he nears second base, the ball is thrown to the second baseman, but it strikes the runner on the back of the neck, stunning him, so that he falls over second base, where he is touched by the second baseman, and called out by the umpire; runner maintains he is not out, as time should have been called by the umpire immediately upon his being knocked out.

If he was on the base he was safe; if not, he was out.

Runner is out, but it is a base hit for batsman.

Three men on bases, with two out. Batter hits the ball, which hits the base-runner, off third, making three out. Is the batter to be credited with a hit?

Rule is plain on the point, and says: "In all cases where a base-runner is retired by being hit by a batted ball, unless batted by himself, the batsman should be credited with a base hit."

Stupid base running causes a lot of trouble.

Runners on second and third when batter hit a home run. Runner from second failed to touch third base, and when the ball was held on the base the umpire called him out and also called out the player who hit the home run for passing the preceding base-runner. Was umpire right?

No. The player who made the home run had no knowledge that the runner from second had failed to touch third base. The decision at third base could not have been except on appeal. Read Rule 57. The man who failed to touch third base came within the "legally put out" clause the moment that he failed to touch the base. In other words, he was automatically legally put out when he did fail to touch the base. Yet if the opposing side did not claim the put out it could not be made, which protects the man making the home run. Conversely, the side at bat could score because a run could not be decided as not having scored when it was uncertain that the neglect of the runner to touch third base had been observed by either side.

Runner must actually touch the plate.

If in sliding to home plate the base-runner should not be touched out by the catcher and at the same time should roll over the catcher's body, which is over home plate, is the runner out if the catcher can tag him before he can get his foot or some part of his body on home plate?

He is.

Slide head foremost or feet foremost.

Is base runner permitted to slide either head foremost or feet foremost at will?

Yes, but feet foremost is better. Danger to arm sliding head foremost.

Runner can turn in either direction.

Runner on third, two out; batter gets a hit and runner from third scores, but batter after reaching first safely turns wrong way and ball is put on him. Does run count?

There is no such thing as runner turning wrong way after overrunning first. He can return to first no matter which way he turns, so long as he does not attempt to advance. In any event, the run would count, presuming it had crossed the plate before batter had been put out after reaching first safely and he could only be put out under circumstances stated.

Runner should not be penalized if umpire is hit.

Runner attempted to steal second base; catcher's throw hits umpire and umpire sends runner back to first. Was decision right? Runner attempts to steal third; catcher's throw hits bat of batter, who is in his box; umpire sends runner back to second. Was this decision right?

Thrown ball that hits umpire is still in play and umpire who sent runner back was wrong. If there was no interference on part of batter would hold this a bad throw on part of catcher, just as if he had hit a runner. If batter interfered and was at fault he would be out and runner would be sent back.

Carelessness of base-runner robs batter of credit for a hit.

Runner on first base, batter triples, man on first scores, but is called out for cutting second. Does batter get credit for a hit?

If there were two out when batter tripled, he cannot be credited with the hit. Base-runner's failure to touch second was same as though he had been forced out at that base. In case no one, or but one, was out, then credit would be given for the hit, as only a man who was on base could be declared out for his failure to touch second.

Batter must become a base-runner to start a force play.

A runner is on third base and a runner on second base. The runner on second base leads too far off the base and the runner from third tries to score. The second baseman throws the ball to the catcher, who stands on home plate, but does not try to touch the runner from third, who succeeds in returning to that base. Is not the runner from third base out, because he is forced, and is it not true that the catcher does not have to touch him?

The runner from third base is not forced, and if he is to be put out he must be touched by the ball in the hand of the catcher. If he succeeds in returning to third base without being touched, and if the runner from second base returns to that base without being touched, neither of them is out. No force play can result in base ball except that it begins by the batter becoming a base-runner.

Steal is allowed on a foul tip.

If the batter makes a foul tip and the base-runner on first has stolen second at the same time is the steal allowed?

It is. A foul tip caught by a catcher is the equivalent of a strike.

This rule seems to vex almost all young players.

A base-runner running from second to home on a two-base hit goes more than three feet outside of the base line between third base and home. Should he not be called out?

The runner is never out on such a play for running out of line unless he runs out of line to avoid a fielder who stands on the baseline waiting to touch him with the ball. When a man is going at top speed from second base to home it is simply impossible for him to remain within a three-foot line. What seems to mislead almost all in regard to this rule (Rule 56, Section 7) is that they overlook this clause: "He runs more than three feet from a direct line between a base and the next one in regular or reverse order to avoid being touched by a ball in the hands of a fielder." If it is not done to avoid a fielder, the runner can gallop as hard as he likes in a wide circle to try to get his run over the plate. As a matter of fact—and it is a point young base-runners should bear in mind—the greater the detour the runner makes, the more he is handicapping himself. The closer he can adhere to the circuit of the bases, the less ground he has to cover.

Base runner is entitled to the next base.

If there should be a runner on first base who started to steal second as the fourth ball was about to be pitched and who was touched by the second baseman before he could touch second base after the umpire had announced "ball four," would the base-runner be out?

No; when the fourth ball is announced it entitles the runner on first to second base.

Can the coacher make believe to run from third base to home plate?

No. See Rule 56, Sec. 19.

This is a query that is often asked.

Can the runner turn either side of first base when running from home plate?

Yes, unless he makes a direct turn toward second and gives indication of trying to make that base. In that event he is subject to being put out.

Runner may start the instant ball touches fielder's hands, regardless of juggling.

Runner on third, one man out, batter hits a fly ball to left field, which both left and center fielder go after. Left fielder makes the play, but as the ball strikes his hands he stumbles, and the ball is knocked out of his hands into the air. The center fielder completes the catch by getting the ball before it reaches the ground. The runner on third held his base until the ball struck the hands of the left fielder, then started for the plate. The center fielder, after making the catch, threw the ball to the third baseman, who touched that base, and the team in the field then made the claim for a double play on the ground that the runner on third had left that base before the actual completion of the catch. Does the run count?

The run certainly does count. The base-runner must hold his base on a fly ball until a fielder gets the ball in his hands, which the runner on third did. The fact that the play was not actually completed until the center fielder made the catch does not enter into the controversy. If such were the case, fielders could make a practice of manipulating every fly ball that was hit to them, greatly to the advantage of the team in the field. In connection with this problem, it may be added that a definite rule has been made permitting the runner to leave a base the instant a fly ball touches an outfielder's hands.

Base-runner on returning to his original base must touch each intervening base in order.

Runner on first attempts a steal of second, and gets away to a good lead. The batter gets mixed on his signals, and hits a long fly to left field. The batsman noting this, checks up his intended slide, and in rounding second on his way to third, finally decides the fielder will be able to make the catch. In retracing his steps he fails to touch second on his way back to first. He gained no ground, simply overstrided the bag. The ball was thrown to second and the runner declared out, when the fielder touched that base with the ball in his possession. Was that the proper decision?

It certainly was, for in such a case as you have cited the runner must touch all intervening bases on his way back to his original base.

Player must have ball in his possession to block a runner legally off a base.

Runner on second, batter singles to right field, and runner attempts to score on the hit. The catcher blocks the plate, and the runner slides into him, while the ball is still some distance away. Despite frantic efforts on the part of the runner, he is unable to reach the plate, although within about six inches of it all the time. In the meantime the ball arrives, and the catcher touches the runner. What is the proper ruling on the play?

The runner should have been declared safe. The catcher has no right to block off the runner without having the ball in his possession.

Running across the base line with the ball in a fielder's hand does not retire a base-runner by a presumable force play.

If a fielder with the ball in his hand runs across a base line ahead of a runner who is trying to advance from one base to another, can the runner be declared out on a force play?

A base-runner may not be put out in this manner and the query which came from the Far West is not so extraordinary as it may seem. There has been an opinion of this nature held by heritage of custom of long ago. It is due to improvised rules which were made for "two old cat" and "town ball" and very likely the idea insinuated itself into Base Ball because of local desire.

Runners score ahead of home run in final inning.

I have read the new rule in regard to making a home run in the last half of the final inning of any game. Do I understand that all of the runners who are on bases, provided there are any, must score ahead of the batter, even if more runs are to be made than the actual one which wins for the team last at bat?

That is the correct understanding. If the score is 2 to 1 in favor of the team which was first at bat when their half of the final inning is played and then three runners for the team second at bat should get on bases, and the next batter should make a home run, all of the runners as well as the batter would score. That would make the score 5 to 2 in favor of the team last at bat in the final inning. Be sure to note that all of the runners as well as the batter must touch the bases in regular order. Penalty for failure to touch the bases in regular order would be enforced as at any other stage of a game.

Base-runner's right to score from third base with bases filled when batsman is given base on balls.

The bases are filled, two men out, when the batter receives a base on balls. Of course, that really ended the ball game, as it was the last half of the ninth, with the score a tie. In their excitement over the finish, the runner on third, after getting to within thirty feet of the plate, started for his bench, and the batsman, after running half way down the line, started for the bench. Members of the team at bat rushed out and told the runner originally on third to go back and touch the plate; also made the batsman go to first. The team in the field kicked long and loud on allowing the run, insisting that either one of the two—in fact, both—were really out for running out of the line. The umpire allowed the run. Was he correct in the ruling?

The umpire ruled correctly in allowing the run. When the batsman received a base on balls it entitled him to first, and all runners to advance one base. It is impossible to take away something to which you are entitled in Base Ball, hence it would have been wrong to have called either man out, even though they did not follow the straight and narrow path direct to the next base.

Run cannot score on third out in which the batter did not reach first base.

Two out and runner on second; batter hits for two bases, but cuts first base; ball is returned to that base and umpire calls runner out and says run from second does not count. Is decision correct?

The run does not count.

After a fielder has had a chance to make a play on the ball, collision with a base-runner does not constitute interference.

Runner on second, one man out, batter hits a ball to the shortstop's right. The runner on second doesn't believe the shortstop will be able to make the play and tries for third. The shortstop manages to knock the ball down, but it bounds away. In going after the ball, the shortstop collides with the base-runner, knocking the fielder down, but the runner was able to continue on his way. The runner after reaching third, continued on his way to the plate, while the batsman reached second base. What was the proper ruling? Should the runner have been declared out for interference, and the batsman only allowed to take first base?

If a fielder, who always has the right of way, is interfered with by a base-runner, he should always be called out because of the interference. In the case you have cited, however, there was no interference, because the fielder had his chance to make a play on the ball.

First baseman could have touched bag and did not need to throw to catcher.

Runner on first base; batter hits short fly to second baseman, who purposely drops it; runner stays on first and batter stops on his way to base; second baseman recovers ball and throws to first baseman, who tags runner on base, then throws to catcher, who runs down and tags the batter. What is the decision?

Both are out.

Base-runner may turn either way after passing first base and return to first without liability to be put out, providing he does not attempt to go to second.

What are the rights of a base-runner after he passes first base? Can he turn to either the right or left? Must the turn be made in foul territory? Did a base-runner at any time, under the old rules, forfeit his right to first base, if he turned to the left?

A base-runner can turn either to the right or left, without forfeiting his right to the base. The only move that makes him liable to be put out is to make a break in the direction of second base. The runner can make the turn in either foul or fair territory, it makes no difference. At one time under the rules a player made himself liable to be put out if he turned to the left. Memory of that rule still is retained and undoubtedly is the reason why so many believe no runner may turn to the left.

Changes in the pitching rules adopted in 1920 were intended to end "for good and all" every kind of "freak" delivery. Baseball, a rational game, had given latitude to pitchers to deface and injure one of the two principal playing adjuncts of that game. This had made the ball a mechanical contrivance, varying in flight as it was mistreated, and not an implement of sport for sport's sake.

Problems of Pitching

How to rule when a pitched ball strikes the ground before it reaches the batsman.

Pitcher delivers the ball to the batsman. It strikes about six feet in front of the plate, then bounds over the heart of the plate, waist high. Was it a ball or a strike? Would it have been perfectly proper for the batter to have swung at such a ball? If the ball struck the batsman, would he have been entitled to first base, if the moment the ball struck the ground the umpire called it a ball?

The moment the ball struck the ground six feet in front of the plate, there was no longer a chance of it being a strike. It surely would have been perfectly proper for the batsman to have hit the ball. In ruling the pitch a ball, the moment it struck the ground, the umpire was in error. He should have waited for the completion of the pitch, which was when the ball passes the batter. When the ball hit the batsman he was entitled to first base.

Inception of a play starts with the wind-up of the pitcher.

The score is 9 to 1 in favor of the team in the field, and it is the first half of the ninth, with two down. The batter singles, and since his run means nothing he is allowed to steal second and third without any attention being paid to his efforts. He was urged to steal home, and as the pitcher started his wind-up he made a break for the plate. At the time there was two balls and one strike on the batter. The pitcher, to add to the foolishness of the situation, kept on winding up as the runner raced for the plate. The runner reached the plate, and was on his way to the bench, before the pitcher finally delivered the ball. If the batter had allowed it to pass, there would have been no question as to the legality of the run. He chose to hit the ball and went out on a fly to left field. Does the run count?

Even though the runner was over the plate in safety, and on his way to the bench, before the ball ever left the pitcher's hands, the run does not count. A run cannot score on a third out, in which such out is a fly ball that is caught. The inception of the play that retired the side was the start of the wind-up, so that the runner actually crossed the plate on a ball that was finally hit to the outfield for a third out.

Pitcher must not wind-up without pitching the ball unless he steps off pitcher's plate.

With a runner on first base the pitcher starts his customary wind-up. Instead of delivering the ball to the batsman he throws to first base and the runner is caught at second base. Does the pitcher's action come under the head of a balk?

It does. The wind-up is one of the customary motions which he uses to deliver the ball. A customary pitching motion not followed by the actual delivery of the ball to the batsman is a balk, unless the pitcher voluntarily steps off the plate.

If pitcher feints to catch a runner, first base is the only base to which he must complete his throw.

Is it necessary that the pitcher throw the ball to third base or to second base when he makes a feint to catch a runner napping at either of the two bases mentioned?

It is not necessary that the pitcher complete the throw to second or third bases, when making a feint in either direction. All that is necessary is that he step toward the base at which he is considering making a play.

Pitcher is differently penalized for the same fault, all depending upon existing conditions.

Is it possible for a pitcher to suffer different penalties for the same infraction of a pitching rule? That is, can a certain faulty delivery under certain conditions be called a ball and under other conditions be ruled a balk?

Yes, it is possible for a certain infraction of the pitching rules to draw different penalties, according to the conditions that exist. For instance, if a pitcher deliver a ball to the batter without having one foot in contact with the rubber, such an infraction is simply called a ball, provided there are no runners on the bases. With a runner or runners on the bases, the delivering of the ball to the batsman without having one foot in contact with the rubber, is ruled a balk, and all runners are entitled to advance one base.

Play is automatically suspended when balk is called.

Runner on first base. Pitcher, after making several efforts to catch him napping, pulls a move that the umpire rules a balk and so declares. Not heeding the ruling, the pitcher delivers the ball to the batsman, and he hits for three bases, scoring the runner from first. What is the proper ruling?

The moment the umpire declared a balk, play was suspended and no attention should be paid to any action on the part of the batsman. The runner on first was entitled to second under the balk, but had no right to score. The batsman who tripled should have been made to bat again.

Pitcher must step off rubber when trying to catch runner stealing home.

If a runner attempts to steal home, while the pitcher is standing on the rubber without having made any motion to pitch, is it possible for the pitcher to make a play on that runner at the plate?

If the pitcher has not started his delivery, all he need to do is back off the rubber, and then he has the same right to make a play at home as at any other base. If he remains on the rubber and throws the ball to the plate, it is a legal delivery, at which the batsman has the right to swing if he desires.

Penalty for a wild pitch.

Base-runner on first; pitcher makes a wild pitch and ball strikes home plate, bounds on top of grandstand, strikes wire netting at back of stand, rolls around roof and then drops into playing field. I claim ball had left playing field and is out of play and that base-runner is entitled to two bases under the rule. Is that correct?

If there was any ground rule that gave the runner two bases he was entitled to them, as the ball is always out of play on a wild pitch.

"Hidden ball" penalized.

Has the pitcher the right to stand on the pitcher's plate, as if he meant to pitch, but without the ball in his possession?

No. Section 7, Rule 34, states explicitly that if the pitcher takes a legal position on the rubber without the ball in his possession, regardless of whether he makes any motion to pitch or not, it is a balk. A balk advances each base-runner and, in addition to that, the ball is dead. Should a pitcher try the old "hidden ball" trick with the score even and a runner on third base his foolishness would lose the game for his side.

Dead ball if ball hits bat accidentally.

The pitcher threw a fast inshoot at which the batter dodged and in dodging he threw up his bat. The ball passed over the batter's head but struck his bat and fell foul. What is the ruling?

Before the changes were made in the rule code this would have been a strike if the batter did not have two strikes when the ball hit his bat. Now it is a dead ball, providing the batter dodged the ball for safety.

Pitcher may step off plate.

May the pitcher step off the plate after being in position because perspiration trickling into his eyes temporarily blinds him?

He may. The umpire should call "Time." He may also step off the plate to dry his hands. This becomes necessary when a game is played in a heavy mist or a light shower.

Balk if pitcher drops ball.

With a runner on first base the pitcher in the act of delivering the ball to the batsman dropped it. What is the ruling?

It is a balk under the new rules. It is also a balk if he drop the ball in the act of throwing it to first base. There is no balk penalty if the ball is dropped in the act of delivering it to the batter when there is no one on bases, since the batter never advances to first base on a balk.

Strike even if pitcher is off plate.

The pitcher was not standing on his plate, but, as much for fun as anything else, delivered the ball to the bat and the batter swung at it. The umpire called a strike. The batter said it could not be a strike unless the pitcher were on the plate.

The umpire was right. It is a strike. If the batter had batted the ball to the shortstop and the shortstop had thrown it to first base the batter would have been out if the ball had reached the base before him. Also, if he made a safe hit it would have counted as a safe hit.

This was a prize "bone" play on part of pitcher.

Batter hits ball to pitcher, runs towards first base and then stops. The pitcher, forgetting to throw to first base, steps on the rubber, facing the next batter. The runner, seeing this, continues to first base after he has stepped outside of the three-foot limit. Is he out if he reaches first base before the ball is thrown there?

No. He is plainly within the rule and the pitcher is wholly at fault for not making the play correctly.

Any motion to deceive a base runner is a balk.

If the pitcher should make a motion with his knee, which is similar to that which he makes when he is about to pitch the ball, should the umpire call a balk against him?

The umpire certainly should. Any motion which tends to deceive a base-runner should be punished at once by the umpire.

Pitcher taken out with two balls on batter.

In fourth inning pitcher becomes wild and after filling bases on passes has two balls on fourth batter, when manager orders him out; umpire refuses to let him leave position, telling manager he must dispose of man at bat before he can be relieved.

Umpire was wrong. Rule says pitcher must dispose of his first batter upon going into game and this pitcher had disposed of three already in this inning.

Where a pitcher makes a motion to throw to second base.

Can the pitcher turn toward second and make a motion to throw without a balk being charged against him.

Yes.

Only the base-runners can advance on a balk.

Does the batter go to first when the umpire declares a balk?

No. Only the base-runners can advance on a balk.

The pitcher performed his part and should get credit.

When batsman reaches first base after catcher drops the third strike is the pitcher credited with a strike out in his record, although the catcher is charged with an error?

The pitcher is credited with a strike-out.

The most deliberate kind of a balk.

Runners on second and third; pitcher makes motion to throw to batter, also to throw to third, but does not throw to either; umpire calls runner in from third and scores him. Was he right?

It was a balk and runner scores from third and runner on second advances to third.

In this case it was not a balk, but a catcher can make one under certain circumstances.

Runner on third base, pitcher delivers ball to the batsman as the runner starts to steal home. The catcher steps outside his box and receives the ball. The batsman makes no attempt to strike at the ball but blocks the catcher as the latter tries to touch the runner. The team at bat claims that the runner scores because the catcher balked. What should the decision be?

If the batsman clearly interfered with the catcher the runner is out under Rule 56, Section 15, which reads: "The base-runner is out if with one or no one out and a base-runner on third base, the batsman interferes with a play being made at home plate." It has erroneously been asserted that the catcher cannot make a balk. He can assist a balk, but not on this play. Rule 34, Section 9, reads: "Delivery of the ball to the bat when the catcher is standing outside the lines of the catcher's position as defined in Rule 3." This rule is meant to apply to an instance where the catcher would stand outside of his position in order that a batsman might purposely be given first base on four called balls.

Pitcher finishing the game figures as the winner—or loser—as the case may be.

If a pitcher is taken out of the game with the score a tie and another pitcher finishes the game which is won by his team, does he get credit for the victory?

He does, even if the game lasts but an inning longer. This point has been incorrectly ruled upon, on the theory that because a pitcher is in the game nine innings he should receive credit for the game because he goes out when it is a tie. However, the pitcher who is compelled to take his place is as likely to lose the game in one inning, perhaps, as he is to win it, so that all things being equal he must receive credit for a victory as he would be penalized for a defeat.

Some pitchers get away with what clearly resembles a balk.

Is a pitcher compelled to stand perfectly still while in position to pitch or else be charged with a balk? If not, what movements can he make?

The only restriction is that he shall not make any motions that are part of his delivery. It depends largely upon the peculiarities of each pitcher in his delivery.

No umpire can be too familiar with the rules and all umpires will find it worth while to read them over every now and then, to be assured that the mind is fully in touch with all points. The Field Umpire has more authority now than he had when the position was created.

Problems in Umpiring

Umpire's duty in case of injury.

With the score a tie in the last half of the ninth, and two out, the batsman hits a long line drive to right center. Both the right and center fielders make a try for the hit, and either might have made the catch, had it not been for the interference of the other. The right fielder got his hands on the ball, but the moment it struck his hands the center fielder collided with him and both players dropped to the ground unconscious. The ball continued on its way towards the fence. At the moment the ball struck the fielder's hands, the batsman was midway between first and second. It was apparent both players were badly hurt. The crowd, as well as the players in the field, insisted that time be called. The left fielder recovered the ball and relayed it to the plate, but the batter made the circuit easily. Was it proper to allow the run?

It did seem wrong to allow play to continue, but the umpire under the rules could not do otherwise. Play can only be suspended when all chance for action ceases. If the umpires called time every time a player was injured, it would only be a short while when all would be feigning injury when it would be to their advantage.

Failure to announce substitutes does not affect plays.

If the umpire fails to announce a substitute because the captain of the team on which the substitution took place forgot to tell him, are the plays in which that player engaged illegal?

No. The rules now provide distinctly that whether the substituted player is a batter, fielder, catcher, or pitcher, each play in which he took part is legal, even if the umpire did fail to make an announcement.

The umpire and a thrown ball.

When the umpire is hit by a thrown ball does it make any difference whether he is on fair or foul territory? Is there any way in which a thrown ball can be ruled dead and no bases advanced by contact of the ball with the umpire?

A thrown ball is always in play whether it strikes the umpire on fair or foul territory. Base-runner, or runners, shall be entitled to all the bases they can make. When the umpire is stationed back of the bat, the ball becomes dead and runners return to their original bases, if the person or clothing of the umpire interfere with the catcher in an attempt to throw.

Dead ball not fourth ball if bat is accidentally hit.

The ball accidentally hit the bat of the player at bat. It should have been the fourth ball in the sequence of delivery. What was the right decision?

The umpire should have called it a dead ball. So far as strikes and balls were concerned it was nothing.

It is presumed that the ball was a wild pitch. If not, and the ball had rolled fair, it might have been a hit.

Protector did not help the catcher.

With two strikes on batter, pitcher delivers ball, which batter fouls. It strikes the catcher squarely on the protector and bounds into the air. The catcher managed to regain possession of the ball before it touched the ground. The umpire ruled the batter out. The manager of the team at bat protested against the decision, claiming the catcher had been aided in making the catch by the protector.

Since the ball struck the catcher's protector squarely, and then bounded directly off same into the air and was recovered by the catcher before touching the ground, the umpire ruled correctly. If the ball had caught in the protector, and held momentarily, it would have been different, as in such a case the protector would have aided in making the catch and the batter would not have been out. In all the cases the rebound must be direct.

Ground rules should always be definite.

An overflow crowd makes a ground rule necessary. A badly thrown ball is apt to go into the crowd. It is agreed that on such throws runners shall be entitled to one base aside from the one to which they are going. There is a runner on first, the pitcher catches him napping off of first base but throws the ball into the crowd. The team in the field contends that the runner was going back to first to avoid being caught, and, as he was going back to first, he was only entitled to one base, which would send him to second. The team at bat contended the moment the runner was caught he started for second and was entitled to go to third. Is this a good rule?

The base to which you are going and one additional base on an overthrow is always a bad rule. It always causes a dispute as to which way the runner was actually headed. A much better rule is simply two additional bases from the one occupied at the start of the play.

When umpire calls time players colliding.

In a collision on the base lines the ball was diverted to one side and two runners scored from second and third. The side in the field said the umpire should have called "Time" and not permitted more than one to score. Is there a rule to govern this?

Yes. Rule 74, section 2, says: "In case of accident to a player or players in attempting to make a play on either a batted or thrown ball, 'Time' shall not be called until, in the judgment of the umpire, no further play is possible." If two runners had an opportunity to score, he could not rule against them.

When fair ball hits umpire on foul ground.

A hit on fair ground after it passed third base rolled foul and struck an umpire who was watching a play. The side in the field insisted the ball was dead and base-runners must hold their bases. Were they right?

No. In Rule 54, section 1, it explicitly states that if the ball fairly hit strike the umpire on foul ground, the ball shall be considered in play.

Umpire to determine batted ball hitting runner.

The ball, after being hit by the batter, passed the shortstop and hit the runner back of the shortstop. The umpire called the runner out, although it looked as if the shortstop should have handled the ball. Was the decision right?

This is a matter of judgment on the part of the umpire. If he were satisfied that the shortstop should have handled the ball he should not have called the runner out. On the other hand, if satisfied that the hit might have been safe, so far as fielding was concerned, the runner should have been called out.

Umpire must rule on "freak" delivery without appeal.

Must the umpire enforce the new rules which have been adopted to eliminate the "freak" pitching? I mean, is it necessary that he shall enforce the rule without an appeal from the side at bat?

The umpire is expected to enforce the rule without appeal and, more than that, if there are two umpires, the Field Umpire has the same jurisdiction over the "freak" deliveries as the Umpire-in-Chief. It will keep both of them busy, but ultimately it is safe to say that "freak" deliveries will be dropped from the game. The pitchers will learn to depend upon their personal skill as opposed to "freak" pitching.

The umpire is not to act as a coacher.

Is the Field Umpire permitted to tell base-runners when and when not to run?

He is not. The Field Umpire is a judge of play and not a coach of the players.

Umpire may make ground rule when the captains of the teams do not agree on one.

There is an overflow crowd which fringes the playing field. The captain of the home team proposes a ground rule to the umpire that all balls hit into the crowd shall be good for three bases. Such a rule is not acceptable to the visiting captain, who believes such a hit does not merit more than two bases. The two captains are deadlocked. What should the umpire do in such a case?

The rules give the umpire the right to make a special rule in case the captains cannot agree, and his decision shall be final.

Umpire renders a decision on a balk without appeal being made.

Does the team at bat have to make an appeal to the umpire when it is believed that the pitcher has committed a balk?

It is not necessary for an appeal on a balk. The umpire, if he believes a balk has been committed, always immediately calls it. The fact that the team at bat always raises a protest, if they believe a pitcher has made a balk, has caused many people to believe that an appeal must be made for a balk ruling.

When the Umpire-in-Chief was justified in asking the Field Umpire for information.

With a base-runner on second base the batsman tapped the ball in front of the plate on fair ground. He started to run to first base and ran into the ball. I did not see it. Players of the fielding side raised the question as to whether the batsman was out. I asked the Field Umpire for information and after he had related the circumstances I declared the batter out and sent the runner back from third base to second base. Did I do right?

Yes. The rules gave you permission to ask for information and the rules also make it imperative that any runner who may have advanced under such conditions be sent back to the base which he had left.

When players are ordered from the field by the umpire and refuse to depart.

The Field Umpire in a game in which a local championship was at stake ordered two players to leave the field. They refused to do so and defied him to put them off. They continued to play and the umpire said nothing further to them. What should he have done?

The rules give the Field Umpire right to remove players from the field, but do not permit him to forfeit a game. When the players who had been notified to leave the playing field refused to depart the Field Umpire should have notified the Umpire-in-Chief. The latter had it within his power to forfeit the game because of disobedience on the part of the players in question. If there had been a mistaken ruling on the part of the Field Umpire the Umpire-in-Chief could have consulted with his assistant and decided according to the outcome of the consultation. The Umpire-in-Chief would sustain the Field Umpire to preserve discipline, and no matter what the outcome of a consultation might be the players who were ordered from the field should have departed immediately, to conform to the rules for sportsmanlike Base Ball. If they believed that a rule had been misinterpreted they could appeal to their captain for justice.

Umpire is asked to make a decision by the team in the field on three different plays.

On what play or plays is it necessary for the team in the field to make an appeal to the umpire for a decision?

In a batting-out-of-order play it is necessary that the team in the field make an appeal that the proper batsman be declared out, before a ball is pitched to the next batter. In all plays where a base-runner misses a base, it is necessary that a player with the ball in his possession touch the base which he misses or the player and ask for a ruling. Also when a base-runner leaves a base before the ball is caught.

Ball is in play even when it hits an umpire.

While runner is trying to steal second the catcher throws the ball and hits the umpire. The latter sends the runner back to first. Was he right?

No. The ball is in play.

Umpire may not enforce penalty if thrown glove does not hit ball.

Suppose an infielder throws his glove at the ball, but does not hit it. Is the penalty still to be enforced?

No. If the ball has not been interfered with, there is no penalty.

In regard to the method to be employed by the umpire to suspend play.

Is it possible for the umpire to suspend play unless he actually calls out the word "Time"?

He should say "Time," if he can articulate. However, if he should put up his arm during an uproar, or if in some other way that is plainly manifest, he should make it evident that play was to cease, the intent of the rule would have been observed. Frequently, not half of the players on a ball field hear an umpire when he calls "Time," but take it for granted by indications that "Time" has been called.

When umpire working back of catcher interferes with catcher, play is automatically suspended.

Runner on first attempts a steal of second. The umpire working back of the plate interferes with the catcher in making the throw, the ball going to right field, runner reaching third base. What is the proper ruling?

On all such plays where the umpire interferes with the catcher, play is immediately suspended and no bases run. The runner who advanced to third on the bad throw should be sent back to first.

How umpire should handle play when runner proceeds from first base to third on single.

With a runner on first base, the batsman singles to right field, the runner on first going to third on the play. The fielder makes a throw to that base in an effort to cut him down. What umpire should make a ruling on such a play at third?

The plate umpire should go down to third the moment he sees the batsman has hit safely. He has plenty of time to be in a perfect position to judge such a play. The field umpire must watch the batsman to see that he touches first base, also to be in a position to get a play at second base, in case the batsman decides to go down on the throw-in. Very often the throw is cut off and a play made on the batsman at second. By such a scheme of working, the two umpires are in a perfect position to handle any of the plays that can possibly arise.

Catcher may not interfere on "squeeze" play.

With a runner on third the batter tried the "squeeze" play to get him home. The catcher ran in front of the batter and caught the ball, touching the runner out. The umpire allowed it. Was he right?

There was some question in regard to this play up to 1920, but there should be none in the future. Rule 56, section 21, distinctly provides that if the catcher leaves his position to run in front of the batter and prevent a "squeeze" play, the runner shall be permitted to score and the batter be permitted to go to first base. If the catcher pushes the batter out of the way or tips his bat, the same penalty must be enforced. As the "squeeze" play, which is a bunt-and-run play, nothing else, usually is tried in an attempt to tie the score or win a game, the catcher will have to be very careful that he does not interfere with the intent of the batter.

Umpire must reverse his decision if the wind blows a seeming infield fly hit into foul territory.

Runners on first and second, one man out, batter hits up fly ball in the general direction of the pitcher's box. The third baseman elects to make the play. The umpire declares the hit an infield fly, which, of course, is supposed to retire the batsman. A high wind is blowing, which causes the ball to veer in the direction of the foul line. The third baseman was unable to make the catch, but the wind has so carried the ball out of its course that when it falls safely to the ground it is in foul territory. The team in the field contends that since the umpire once ruled the hit an infield fly, the batsman is out. What is the proper ruling?

The batsman is out when the umpire declares an infield fly, but the high wind rather tangled up the judgment of the umpire. Since it is impossible to have an infield fly on a foul ball, there is nothing for the umpire to do except reverse his original ruling, and make the batter hit over.

When an umpire announces "infield fly," his ruling stands whether an infielder or an outfielder tries for the ball.

The bases are filled, one man out, when the batter hits a high fly to deep short. The umpire believes that the ball can be easily handled by an infielder and calls infield fly. The left fielder, who was playing in close, comes running in for the ball, despite the shouts of the shortstop that he would make the play. The shortstop, fearing a collision, steps out of the way, and permits the fielder to make the play. All runners hold their bases. The left fielder not only muffed the ball, but gave it a kick as it hit the ground. All three runners scored, and the batsman reached second base. The team at bat claims the batsman is entitled to hold second, because the handling of the ball by an outfielder made void the ruling of infield fly on the part of the umpire.

The batsman was out, despite the fact that the outfielder insisted on butting in and making the play. If the umpire believes an infielder can make a play on the ball, and so rules to protect the base-runner, the batsman is out no matter who handles the ball.

Umpire rendered only decision possible.

Batsman hits ball to shortstop, who makes a bad throw to first. The first baseman in an effort to make the catch went far up the line, colliding with the base-runner. So great was the force of the collision that runner and fielder were rendered unconscious. The runner was thrown beyond and over first base, but, of course, failed to touch it. The ball rolled into the infield and was recovered by the pitcher, who touched first base. The crowd yelled for the umpire to call time, the moment the players collided? What ruling should have been made on the play?

There is nothing in the rules that gives the umpire the right to call time before the completion of a play, consequently when the pitcher recovered the ball and touched first base, there was nothing for the umpire to do other than to declare the batter out. It does seem almost inhuman to let play go on while a player is helpless on the ground. Yet, if time was called for an accident, regardless of the completion of a play, it would be greatly to the benefit of a team for players to feign injury any time it would work to their advantage.

Umpire "beaned," but ball was in play.

Score a tie in the ninth and two out, when batter hits to third baseman, who makes perfect throw to first that would have retired batter, but umpire gets in way of throw and is hit on the head; runner on third goes home and umpire rules run counts, winning the game. Was umpire correct?

Yes, under the rules; if a thrown or pitched ball hits the umpire, it is in play. This is a change from the previous rule and differs from the rule regarding a batted ball hitting the umpire.

Umpire hit before or after another player had touched ball.

When is a ball that is fouled in play again? Does it go into play as soon as the batter gets in his box and the pitcher is in position or does the runner have to retouch the base he left before it is in play? Batter hits through pitcher and the ball hits the umpire; pitcher recovers ball and throws batter out at first; was not the batter entitled to first base?

Under the rules regarding the foul ball not caught, play is not resumed until the umpire has ordered it and the umpire's duty is to see that all players are back in position, the runner on the base he had left and the pitcher in position with the ball. In brief, play is not resumed until the umpire orders it. If ball did not touch pitcher before hitting umpire, then batter is entitled to base; if it first touches pitcher or was touched by him, then ball is in play and batter can be thrown out.

A player may "revolve" as long as he has not been out of that particular game.

Can a player pitch four innings, play right field two innings and then return to the box and pitch to the finish of the game?

Certainly. So long as the player does not leave the team and the field he may play a different position every inning, if there is occasion for him to do so.

When thrown ball hits coacher.

In throwing to third base the ball got away from the baseman and hit the coacher. The latter did not purposely get in the way of the ball, but the side in the field claimed that it was dead because it had hit him. Was the claim right?

If the coacher did not interfere purposely, the ball was not dead but in play. If the umpire thought the coacher purposely interfered, he should send the runners back to their bases and put the coacher on the players' bench.

Catcher cannot help pitcher to give intentional base.

Do the new rules say that the pitcher may not give an intentional base on balls?

No. They do provide that the catcher may not leave his position in order to assist the pitcher to give an intentional base on balls. If the catcher remain in his position and the pitcher can devise some method by which to get a batter to first base without permitting him to hit the ball, he has that privilege. However, he can no longer have the catcher as an ally for the latter is not permitted to stand far to one side of home plate.

When umpire removes a player for cause from the game play is automatically suspended.

Umpire puts third baseman out of the game for kicking. The pitcher is not aware of it and delivers the ball to the batsman, who hits safely, scoring two runs. What is the proper decision?

Umpires always rule that the moment a player is put out of the game, play is automatically suspended, hence no further action is possible. Usually they call time, but that really is not regarded as necessary, since the suspension of play is automatic. Incidentally, the ejection of a player removes a man from the line-up, making eight instead of nine players on a team, and it is impossible to play with such a condition existing. The runners should be sent back to their original bases, and the batter made to hit over again.

Position of fielder does not make hit fair or foul.

A ball fairly hit in the direction of first base passes about a foot inside, but curved until it was a foot outside after passing first base. The right fielder in trying to field the ball touched same with his gloved hand, but did not hold it. The ball fell on foul territory and the umpire declared it a fair ball, claiming that as the fielder was on fair ground at the time, that the fact of him touching the ball made it a fair ball irrespective of where it fell.

The hit was a "foul ball," if the outfielder touched it first in foul territory, regardless of the fact that his body was in fair territory. The position of the fielder had nothing whatever to do with this case.

An important decision.

President Johnson of the American League sustained a decision of Umpire Chill in the Boston-Cleveland game of June 3, 1916, which it is said established a precedent for plays in which an umpire interferes with a base-runner. The decision of Chill, against which Boston protested, was that the runner return to his base. So far as known no similar case has occurred in major league base ball and is not covered by the rules. Turner, after making a hit, rounded first base and collided with Chill twice. He then stopped and walked to second base, where he was touched by the Boston second baseman. He was first called out, but, after a conference with Umpire Dineen, the decision was reversed and Turner was allowed to return to first.

This was a tie game.

In the last half of the ninth inning, after two men were out, the umpire called the game on account of darkness. Before the ninth inning was played the Grays were leading, 8 to 3. During their first half of the ninth they did not score, but during the Blues' half, or until two men were retired, they scored 5 runs, tying the game. At this moment the umpire called the game. The Blues claimed that as there were two-thirds of the last half of the ninth played before game was called score remains a tie.

The game in question ended a tie (see Rule 24).

Returning to base under ground rules agreement.

In the third inning with one out, A walked and, on the next pitch, A started for second (with the intention of stealing). B hit this pitch for a clean single to right, on which A kept going to third, and also scored, B going to second on the throw-in. Owing to the ground rule, which was "One base on anything hit into right; you had to make it" (no stipulation about over-running and being put out) A was sent back to third, and on his way back was touched out, umpire ruling play O. K., also putting B back on first. Was the umpire correct in his decision?

Clearly a wrong and unjust decision. It frequently occurs that players go beyond the bases to which they are entitled under a ground rule agreement. In such instances play is automatically suspended and the umpire directs such a player or players to return to the base or bases to which they are entitled under the ground rule agreement, and in returning they run no risk or liability of being put out.

Umpires have been known to ask scorer for the count.

Are the official balls and strikes, as called by the umpire, kept by the official scorer?

No; unless he likes to do it for amusement.

It is up to the captain of the opposing team to decide.

Is it possible for a player to return to the game after another player has run for him?

Yes, if it has been agreed upon by both captains. If the opposing captain will not permit a player to return to the game after a player has run for him, it is impossible for the player again to resume his place on the field.

Do not forget that when a catcher drops the third strike it is an error.

When the first baseman fails to touch first because his feet and mind do not work in harmony as a runner comes down from home, and if he has had ample time to touch the base to put the man out, it is an error.

The rules say so now.

The "error" was always there, but it was not an easy matter to make some persons grasp the fact.

Problems in Scoring

Defining the credit of the pitcher for a strike-out, a point which embarrasses many young scorers.

If the catcher drops the third strike and the base-runner reaches first base in safety, is the pitcher credited with a strike-out? If the catcher drops a third strike and the runner is put out at first, does the pitcher receive credit for a strike-out?

In both instances credit the pitcher with a strike-out in the summary of the score.

How to score the play when the batter steps outside of the batsman's lines.

The batter, in taking a running start for the ball, hits it to fair territory and beats the throw to first base but is called out by the umpire for stepping out of his position. What is the correct manner in which to score the play and to whom should credit for the put-out be given?

Charge the batter with a time at bat, but do not credit him with a base hit. This is in accordance with Rule 85, section 6, which states that the catcher is given credit for the put-out when the ball is illegally batted.

When a palpable muff is made on a foul fly it is scored an error always.

First baseman drops a foul fly. On the next pitched ball the batter is retired on strikes. One authority says the first baseman should not be given an error because the batter never reached first. Is that right?

No. A palpable muff is scored an error, no matter what happens to the batter later.

Base-runner not to be credited with stolen base if he over-slides the base and is touched out.

Runner steals second but overslides and is touched out. Does he get credit for a stolen base?

No. Read Section 9, Rule 85.

Batsman receives credit for a sacrifice on fly hit only when a run scores.

On a fly out to right field, runner goes from second to third; does batter get credit for a sacrifice fly?

He does not. A sacrifice fly can be credited only when a run scores from third base. If a runner were on second base, and advanced from second to third base on a fly hit and scored from third base on an error, the batsman who had been caught out on the fly would not be credited with a sacrifice fly hit.

Any misplay that prolongs the life of a base-runner is scored as an error.

Runner on first is caught off base and is run back and forth; then first baseman drops ball and runner is safe back on first, is first baseman charged with error?

Yes.

Runner on first steals second and umpire calls him out. Umpire finds shortstop dropped the ball and calls runner safe. Is shortstop given error?

Yes.

Two continuous plays are always a double play.

Runner on first and batter hits to pitcher, who throws to first, retiring batter; runner from first rounds second and tries for third, but first baseman makes throw that puts him out before he reaches base. I contend it is scored double play, but others say it is no double play because runner had reached second safe and then another play starts. Which is right?

It is a double play.

Error for catcher on dropped third strike.

The catcher dropped the third strike, allowing the runner to reach first base. How should this be scored?

Score it as an error. It's just the same as a fumble on the part of an infielder or a muffed fly.

Cannot score a base hit on a force play.

Batsman hits the ball to the outfield. It is hit far enough and apparently safely enough for a base-hit. There is a runner on first base, but he is so slow in running to second that he is thrown out. The batsman is easily safe on first. A contends that it is a base-hit and B contends that it is not. Who is right?

B is right. No base-hit can be scored on a force play. Of course, it seems unjust to A, but even in the major leagues there have been instances when runners "loafed" between bases until the batsman lost a base-hit.

No player should be given an error for trying.

An outfielder, after a long run, touches the ball with the palm of his hand, but is unable to hold it. Please decide whether this is an error.

Not as the writer states the case. Earnest effort on the part of a fielder to attempt to field a fly or ground hit never should be scored as an error. In former days there was a general impression that if a player only touched the ball on a fielding play an error should be scored against him. Harsh treatment of that character would discourage every ambitious ball player.

Home run not scored if preceding runner is third out.

A runner is on first base and the batter raps the ball over the fence. The runner on first cuts second on his way to the plate and is declared out. He is the third hand out. Is the batter given a home run for his hit over the fence?

No. The game was completed when the third hand was put out. The batter could not get to second base, because the runner was theoretically out at second base before the batter could touch it, and the runner positively out when it was decided that he did not touch the base.

Error for first baseman failing to touch first.

The first baseman had the ball in time to put out the runner, but he failed to touch first base. How should that have been scored?

Give the first baseman an error.

When bases are not to be credited as stolen.

With the score 10 to 2 in the first half of the ninth inning, and two hands out, the side at bat got a man to first base. He stole second and third, no effort being made to prevent him. The next batter made a hit. He also stole second and third, no effort being made to prevent him. That resulted in a total of four stolen bases. Should they be credited?

No longer. They were credited in the past and it was an unfair method. In case of a keen race between players for the base-stealing championship of the year, one or two bases given any one of three or four men might decide an unearned title in favor of the recipient of the gifts.

When catcher interferes with the batsman, the latter goes to first base, but no runner may advance unless forced to do so.

Runner on third and two out; batter in swinging at ball strikes catcher's mitt with his bat. Umpire allows him first base and lets runner score on ground of interference. Was decision correct?

The run should not have been allowed to score.

Plainly an error, and a stupid one.

With two batters out a grounder is batted to the shortstop. There are runners on second and third bases. The shortstop, forgetting that there is not a runner on first base, picks the ball up and throws it to the home plate. The runner who was going in from third gets back to third safely. The batter also reaches first in safety. Is this what is called a fielder's choice?

"Fielder's choice" has to stand for a great deal, but it doesn't have to stand for that. With two out the shortstop had but one play to make—throw to first base. When he failed to do so he was to be charged with an error, exactly as he would have been if he had thrown the ball over the grand stand.

The side in the field must appeal for a decision

—When runner fails to touch a base;

—When the runner is said to have left a base before a fly ball is caught;

and

When the runner is alleged to have turned toward second base after passing first.

The umpire never volunteers a decision on these plays.

Miscellaneous Problems

Basemen are entitled to stand on their bases when runners are advancing.

The batsman raps a long drive to the outfield. The ball is safe and it seems as if the batsman should make a home run. When the ball is batted all of the basemen step on their bases and the runner is compelled to go around them. Do the rules permit that?

They do. If the basemen do not interfere with the runners they have a perfect right to stand on the bases in position to catch any throw which may be made to them, even though a runner is circling the bases.

No specific penalty for a plugged bat.

What is the exact rule penalty if the batsman uses a plugged bat?

The rules do not specify any exact penalty for using a plugged bat. If the umpire were satisfied that the bat which was used violated the rules of the game he could insist upon its removal from the playing field and upon refusal to remove it might forfeit the game under Rule 26, section 5.

The fact that a batsman bats out of turn must be discovered during the game.

After a championship game was completed it was discovered that a batsman of one of the teams had not batted in turn. That he did not bat in turn would not have affected the outcome of the game? Should the game have been declared no game?

The score and the outcome of the game must remain as the contest finished. If the team in the field does not discover that the wrong batsman is at bat, as is defined by the rules, the game stands as played.

Players of the team at bat should not touch the ball even when it appears not to be in play.

There is a runner on third base. The batsman hits the ball down the third-base line. The runner on third leaves the base and kicks the ball when it is about three inches out on foul ground. Is he out for so doing?

While it is true that the ball to all intents was not in play, the runner took an unnecessary risk. It is better for the players of the team at bat not to touch the ball at any time. Suppose the umpire, not being in the best of position to watch the ball, took the ground that it had not stopped rolling and might have rolled fair? As a result of this he might have called the runner out for obstructing an infielder.

A player may play in more than one position if he does not leave the game.

Suppose the pitcher is batted hard and the shortstop goes in to pitch. When this takes place the pitcher goes to the shortstop's position or perhaps the pitcher goes to right field and the right fielder to the shortstop's position. Is it legal?

A player may play in as many positions as his captain permits on the fielding side of a team if he does not leave the game. He can occupy the nine different positions if he plays continuously.

Third put-out ends inning; batsman had term at bat.

The rule reads a base on balls is not a "time at bat." Suppose a player receives a base on balls or is hit by a pitched ball and there is a runner on the bases who is put out while the player receiving the base on balls is jogging to first base; does the player who received a base on balls go to bat first in the next inning? He did not have a "time at bat."

It is true that he did not have a technical "time at bat," so far as the scoring definition is concerned, but he did have a term at bat, and he does not go to bat first in the following inning. The batter who succeeds him in the batting order is the first batter in the next inning.

Different degrees of similar penalty when thrown glove strikes a batted or thrown ball.

What is the difference between a batted ball and a thrown ball being hit by a glove detached from the person of a fielder?

When a fielder hits a thrown ball with his glove, all runners are entitled to advance two bases. When the glove comes into contact with a batted ball, all runners are entitled to three bases.

When clothing, mask or protector assist catcher in making a play all conditions are changed.

There are two strikes on the batter. The batter swings at the next delivery and misses, fouling the ball slightly. It strikes the catcher's protector and bounds off, the catcher recovering the ball before it touches the ground. Is the batsman out?

The batsman is out in all such cases, provided the ball bounds direct off the protector. If on such a play, the ball was momentarily held, say between the mask and protector, and then rolled out, being recovered by the catcher before the ball touched the ground, the batter would not be out.

Game won in last half of fifth inning.

The score of a game in which we were playing was 3 to 2, in favor of the team second at bat in the last half of the fifth inning, with only one out, when rain fell and prevented the continuance of the game. Did the team second at bat win?

It did.

What happened when a ball out of play was returned to the field.

With a base-runner on third, the batsman hit a foul. The ball went outside the ground. The umpire threw the alternate ball to the pitcher and called "Play." As the runner started to try to steal home, some one returned the first ball to the diamond. It dropped on the infield and as it bounded struck the pitcher on the nose. The latter became confused and the runner who had been on third scored with ease. What should the umpire have done?

As a ball not in play had been thrown back to the field, it was interfering with the work of the pitcher. Section 2 of Rule 74 covers the case. This section reads: "In case of an accident which incapacitates a player from service on the field the umpire must suspend play." This would cut off the run, as the runner from third base would have been running on a dead ball.

When a ball hits stand not the regulation distance.

Grandstand is less than ninety feet from the home plate, as prescribed by the rules. It is agreed that on a wild pitch the runner shall be entitled to one base, if the ball comes into contact with the stand. Such a thing happens, but the runner on first at the time tries to go to third on a wild pitch that strikes the stand. The catcher recovers the ball and throws the runner out at third. What is the decision?

The moment the ball strikes the stand, which is less than ninety feet from the plate, it becomes dead. The runner who tried to go from first to third on the play, should not be declared out, but simply sent to second.

Advancing a base on a wild pitch with an overthrow ground rule.

A city league adopted a rule by which the base-runner was to be allowed to take one base on an overthrow at first base, third or home. A runner started from second to steal third and the pitcher also made a wild pitch at the same time. The umpire would not permit the runner to score from second, holding him at third. Was he right?

Advancing a base on a wild throw may mean that the runner is awarded a base if he has made a start for it and in addition is given another base, which is the penalty of the wild throw. The same penalty could be enforceable so far as a wild pitch is concerned, but one base is technically right.

First game of double-header regular game.

Our amateur league occasionally plays a double-header, due to postponement of some other game. We would like to know if there is an official ruling as to which of the games of the double-header is the game regularly scheduled for that afternoon.

The game first played has been declared to be the regularly scheduled game in the professional leagues and the same rule should apply in amateur games, to bring about uniformity.

Player benched cannot again enter game.

If a player was in the game and was taken out and put on the bench, could he run as a substitute runner?

Man taken out of game could not enter game again. See Rule 28, Section 2.

Passed ball agreement when there is not a backstop.

In a game where there was no backstop it was agreed that only one base should be allowed on a passed ball. With A on third and B on second, catcher caught B off his base; at same time A started for home plate and B started for third; wild throw to home and both men scored. B had not touched third base at the time the ball was thrown to home. Is B entitled to score on this play?

Supposing that second baseman threw wild to home plate, B is entitled to score, as a wild throw is not a passed ball (see Rule 85, Section 10); if one base only was agreed on as the limit on wild throws then B was not entitled to score.

An intelligent fielder would not make an attempt to catch a foul fly if there was a chance of the base-runner scoring.

Can a base-runner advance on a foul fly caught by an outfielder?

Yes, but an intelligent fielder would not make an attempt to catch a foul fly if there was a chance of the base-runner scoring.

See diagram of field in Spalding Base Ball Guide.

A statement is made that the distance from the pitcher's box to home plate is 60 feet 3 inches. The other side of the argument says it is 60 feet 5 inches. Which is right?

Neither! it is 60 feet 6 inches.

Hitting a batted ball with the glove.

Batter hits a long drive on a line to left center. Both the left and center fielder started in pursuit of the ball. Neither got within ten feet of the ball as it whizzed by them. The left fielder threw his glove at the ball. It was apparent that the glove had come in contact with the ball. The center fielder recovered the ball, which rolled to the fence. Although he made a fast play on it and a speedy throw to the plate the batsman easily made the circuit on the drive. The team in the field contended that the batsman was only entitled to three bases. What would have been the proper ruling?

Section 6 of Rule 54 does say that the runner shall be entitled to three bases if the fielder stops a batted ball with his glove while detached from his person. It does not, however, say that the base-runner is entitled to more if he can make it. Several years ago I had an outfielder throw his glove at the ball as it was about to pass over the fence. The glove hit the ball, but the ball cleared the fence. I allowed a home run, although the team in the field contended that the batter was entitled to three bases. I have brought the above query up for discussion and the leading umpires are a unit in the belief a home run should be allowed.

When bases are not to be credited as stolen.

With the score 10 to 2 in the first half of the ninth inning, and two hands out, the side at bat got a man to first base. He stole second and third, no effort being made to prevent him. The next batter made a hit. He also stole second and third, no effort being made to prevent him. That resulted in a total of four stolen bases. Should they be credited?

No longer. They were credited in the past and it was an unfair method. In case of a keen race between players for the base-stealing championship of the year, one or two bases thus given any one of three or four men might decide an unearned title in favor of the recipient of the gifts.

Legal game if score equal in last half of fifth inning.

Is a tie game in the last half of the fifth inning legal if the side second at bat is unable to complete its half of the fifth inning because of storm or for other good reason?

Your question has been definitely settled by the new rules, which provide that if the side last at bat in the fifth inning has equaled the score which has been made by the team first at bat, the game is a legal drawn game if it is impossible to proceed further.

Game must be forfeited when there are less than nine players on the field.

Eight players take the field for their half of an inning. The ball is batted and caught. At that moment the captain of the team at bat notes that but eight men are in the field. What should the umpire do upon appeal?

The umpire has but one thing to do. Section 7 of Rule 26 says the umpire must forfeit a game if for any cause there be less than nine players on either team.

Score a run after two hands are out if the third out is not made until after the runner has crossed home plate.

In the first half of the eleventh inning, with the score a tie and two hands out, the batsman hits safely to left field. The runner scores, but the batter is thrown out trying to make third base after the run is over the plate. Does the run count?

It is a legal run. If the third hand had been put out before the batsman had reached first base, or the third hand had been put out on a force play, the run would not have counted. In the case cited, the batsman did reach first base in safety and continued to run the bases while the base-runner, who scored, crossed home plate in safety before the batsman, who had become a base-runner, was put out.

But don't score a safe hit, too, for the batter.

If a fielder fumbles a sure sacrifice hit and the batter reaches first base, is he still credited with a sacrifice?

Yes. If the attempt to sacrifice is palpable, the batter must not be penalized for the mistake of a fielder.

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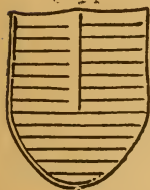
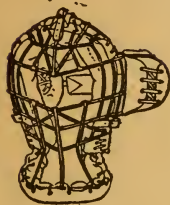
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